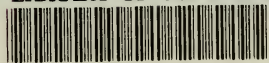


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Helen Scott, Surgeon.

“ I had to go over all the papers of privates as well as officers and copy out their records.”

THE TOMBOY AT WORK

BY
JEANNETTE L. GILDER

Author of "The Autobiography of a Tomboy"

ILLUSTRATED BY FLORENCE SCOVEL SHINN

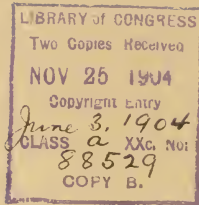


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TO
THE FRIEND OF MY YOUTH AND OF
MY RIPER YEARS
CLARA LOUISE KELLOGG-STRAKOSCH

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The Tomboy
at Work

The Tomboy at Work

CHAPTER I

"MEN must work and women must weep" was a line that was quoted to me every time I expressed a determination to make my own living, and, incidentally, that of others. A stupid line, I thought it. Why should men have all the fun of working, while the women stayed at home and wept? The sentiment did not appeal to me at all. I had no inclination for weeping, and I had a decided inclination for working.

Even if I had not realised the necessity of work after my father's death, I could not have kept out of the working world. It was not in me to stay at home and

weep, while the men "went sailing out into the west." I wanted to sail out into the west, too, and to catch fish as well as they. Just what sort of fish I was going to catch I did not know, but I fully made up my mind to cast my net and see what happened. I knew then, as I know now, that there was work for the willing, if not sooner, then later; and I intended to get mine sooner.

There were not many things for women to do in those days, and fewer in Birdlington than in most places. There was a woman in the post-office—she was the postmaster's wife, to be sure,—a kindly soul, who did not seem to take much interest in her business, possibly because she had so much else to do. She was stout, and rather scant of breath, and I noticed that it was as much as she could do to reach the top boxes even when she stood tiptoe. There I had the advantage of her. It was the lower boxes that would give me the most trouble.

Perhaps it would be a relief to the good woman if I should offer to take her position. The only way to find out was to ask.

"Mrs. Farnum, do you like to sort the mail and hand out the letters?" I inquired.

"I can't say I'm over partial to it," she answered frankly.

"How would you like me to take your place?"

Mrs. Farnum was a pleasant-looking woman, with round, rosy cheeks, well screened by dancing brown ringlets. She looked through the little window, and shook her ringlets at me. "You're rather young to be sorting over letters, but you're tall for your age. You could get at them top boxes easier than I can. I don't mind your trying, but I guess you'll get pretty tired of the job before long."

"Not much," I exclaimed joyously. "I couldn't get tired of anything if I was earning my living."

"Earning your living!" and the ringlets stood still with surprise. "Lord save us and bless us! Why, there ain't no money in it for me. I do it just to help Farnum."

"No money in it," I echoed dejectedly; for I had seen visions of a weekly stipend, which, if small, would at least be something to start with. "I've got to earn money, so I'm afraid that I can't take the job. Good morning."

In these days, I should no doubt have thought of going on the stage, but the only stage that I knew anything about in those days was the one that ran between Birdlington and Crosswicks, and I should as soon have thought of riding to success on a hay-wagon as on that slow-going vehicle. The subject was one of daily discussion in the family, where, I am free to confess, my ideas were looked upon as somewhat Quixotic. But I was determined.

"What do you propose?" asked Aunt Maria.

"Propose? I don't propose. This is

not leap-year," I replied pertly, for there was a note of doubt in her voice.

"Don't be rude, Nell," said my mother.

"It is only right that your Aunt Maria and I should know what sort of work you expect to do."

"I can go into an office."

"Go into an office! Any one could do that, but what would you do when you got there?" This with a touch of sarcasm from Aunt Maria.

"I would sweep it out, if necessary," I answered, somewhat nettled. "I think I should like that. So many great men have begun by sweeping out an office."

"Great men, yes; but have you ever heard of a great woman who began her career by sweeping out an office?" asked Aunt Maria.

"It does not make any difference to me what others have done; my mind is made up. I am going into an office, and I am going to write."

"You will do something. There is no

doubt about that, Nell. And I dare say that I shall get used to it; but it seems a terrible thing to me for a girl scarcely fifteen to go out into the world to earn her living," said my mother, with a little shake in her voice.

"It is not respectable," said Aunt Maria, who was more conventional than my mother, and had rigid ideas of woman's sphere.

"Not respectable," I exclaimed. "Look at Rosa Bonheur, Harriet Hosmer, and—and—Dr. Mary Walker."

"Dr. Mary Walker!" Aunt Maria turned pale. "If that's your idea, the sooner you get rid of it the better. Not one of the women you mention proves your argument, for they one and all admit that a woman has no right to go out into the world to work, by making themselves look as much like men as possible. Please do not mention their names in my presence again." She really shuddered as she left the room.

I could not blame Aunt Maria for her point of view, as it was the only one held in those days. Girls were not supposed to occupy themselves with anything but sewing and housekeeping. Anything like independence was shocking, and to be deplored. My mother was more pained than shocked at my determination, but she realised that my brother Dixey had taken a pretty heavy burden upon his none too broad shoulders, and, in her heart, she applauded the spirit that urged me on to do my share of the work that had to be done.

To find the right thing and to do it was no easy task, but I was blessed with a sanguine disposition, and no obstacle seemed insurmountable. There was an old book in my attic book-case called, if I remember correctly, "Hazen's Book of Trades." I studied it closely for suggestions, but, as all of them were men's trades, I got few or no hints from that source. The only one that attracted me was that of the printer.

I wanted to be where I could hear the click of the type and smell the black and greasy odor of printer's ink. And then I wished to be as much like Benjamin Franklin as possible. I should have liked to walk up Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, with a loaf of bread under each arm, to make the likeness complete; but a certain sense of propriety restrained me. The next best thing was to speak to the editor, who was also the proprietor and sole reporter, of our local weekly, and ask him if he would let me do some reporting for him.

"There is nothing to report," he said. And, judging by the news columns of his paper, he spoke the truth.

At night, after I had retired to my attic room, I lay awake for hours, it seemed to me, wondering what was the best thing to do. It was quite plain that Birdlington presented no opportunities aside from farming. I thought of growing hops, but was deterred by Aunt Maria, who said

that hops were only used to make beer, which she, being of temperance principles, did not approve of. I turned to the *Weekly Forum* for agricultural hints, and there read of the large profits made from grapes. Again Aunt Maria disapproved. Grapes were profitable only when they were made into wine, and no wine-producing fruit should be grown at Fair View. As the place was hers, I had to obey. There were other reasons why I did not plant vineyards—one being a lack of the necessary means.

About this time, a book called "Ten Acres Enough" fell into my hands. If ten acres were enough, how much more than enough were fourteen! Fair View consisted of fourteen, the most of it tillable. There was a lovely meadow with a brook babbling through it, an orchard, a three-acre lot where we grew oats, and a vegetable garden. The meadow was given over to blackberry bushes and brambles, but it was very

picturesque, with its spreading chestnut trees; a lovely place for picnics. In my mother's childhood, the only water used at the house was hauled up from this brook in barrels. A springless cart, to which an old horse was hitched, brought the barrel up the lane to the house. To sit in the cart was not a very pleasant way of getting down to the brook, but an old man working on the place thought that he would like to try it. He remarked afterward that, if it had not been for the name of riding, he would rather have walked. It was a pretty bumpy road through the lane, and it is to this day. This same old man was employed to fetch the water to the house, and at the end of the week he presented his bill to my grandmother. This is the way it read:

"Dit dut

T brin d watter 2 bites."

To the average reader, this means nothing. It might be hieroglyphics from

the tomb of Rameses, or it might be a doctor's prescription. To my grandmother, it was plain enough. "Dit dut" meant "Mis' Nutt." The man had no palate, and that was the way he pronounced it. "To bringing ditto water, two bits," a bit being a shilling. For many years this unique bill was preserved at Fair View.

To return to farming: I read "Ten Acres Enough" with the greatest avidity. The place described was not more than ten miles down the river from Birdlington, and what could be done at Burlington could be done at Birdlington. When I realised, however, how long it would take to reap any profits from such a venture, I decided that the best thing to do was to get some work that led to immediate results. I did not let the family know that I was finding it difficult to decide upon a line of work, but kept up a bold front and thought hard. In thinking over things one night, I remembered that

my father was well acquainted with the members of a famous publishing house in New York, so I decided to write to the firm and see what they could offer me.

Very promptly an answer came, written in a beautiful, clear hand. The writer, one of the brothers, spoke affectionately and admiringly of my father, and expressed a wish that he could meet my request with the offer of a position. They did not employ women outside of the bindery, and he could hardly ask my father's daughter to take a position there. If I was a boy, now, he could soon give me something to do, for there was a vacancy in the bookkeeper's department.

I was not in the least discouraged by that letter, but sat down at once and answered it. I offered to take the bookkeeper's position. "To be sure," I wrote, "I don't know anything about book-keeping, but I think that I can learn all that is necessary inside of two weeks, and then I will be able to keep the books of

your firm." I can imagine the twinkle in the eye of the kindly old gentleman when he read my letter. He answered it, however, without poking fun at me, and said that it was the rule of the house to have only men bookkeepers, and they could not break it, much as they would like to, for me. So that incident was closed.

Dixey had given up the position that he held as assistant paymaster on the railroad that ran through Birdlington, and had become a reporter on a Newark newspaper. This was much more to his taste, for he, too, loved the smell of printer's ink. He would have held on to the position of paymaster, however, as it enabled him to live at home, but he was convinced from certain things that happened that that was not his line of work. His mind was on other things, no matter how he tried to keep it on the business in hand. One day he went out on the road in a hand-car to pay off the men. He had

thirty thousand dollars tied up in an old newspaper, to avoid attracting attention. At a wayside shanty, where he stopped to get a bite of lunch, he fell to reading a volume of poems that he carried in his pocket. When he finished the poem, he put the book back in his pocket and started out on the hand-car. He had not gone many miles down the road before he missed the parcel. Had he dropped it on the way? or left it at the shanty? Telling the men they would have to go back, as he had left something, he returned to the shanty. Putting on as calm an exterior as possible, he asked the old woman, "Did I leave anything here?"

"Nothin' much," she replied, "some old newspapers is all. I was going to light the fire with them, but my old man is such a reader I thought he'd kinder like to read 'em"; and she fished the parcel out from under a broken-down old sofa, where she had kicked it out of the way.

"I'm so glad that your husband is a

reader," said Dixey, clasping the parcel tightly in his arms. "I had some things tied up in that parcel that I shouldn't have liked to lose. Thank you very much. I'll send a book to your husband."

"Much obleeged," replied the woman, "but it ain't wuth it."

Dixey called upon the president of the road, told him what had happened, and offered his resignation. The president would not accept it at first, but when he found that Dixey was in earnest, he told him that he would be allowed to go only when he had found a more congenial place. This came in a short time, and was the position on the Newark paper. It was in reading this paper that I found my first work.

Among the news items was one which said that a Newark journalist, Mr. John Y. Foster, was about to write the history of the New Jersey troops in the Civil War, then just over. The paragraph proceeded to say that much of Mr. Foster's

work would have to be done in Trenton, where the necessary records were kept in the archives of the Adjutant-General's office. I saw my opportunity, and immediately sat down and wrote a letter to Mr. Foster. As I had often heard Dixey speak of him, I knew that he would recognise my name. I told him who I was, and said I should like to help him write his history. I did not mention my qualifications, or lack of them, for the work, but he must have liked my confidence (not to put too harsh a name upon it), and noticed that I wrote a bold round hand. In the course of a few days, Mr. Foster's letter came. In it he said that he was looking for some one to search the records in the Adjutant-General's office for him, and, if I would call upon him at his hotel in Trenton, he would be glad to talk it over.

I am not quite sure how I got home with that letter. I suppose that I ran, but those who saw me said that I flew.

CHAPTER II

DASHING up the stairs to my mother's room, with the letter in my hand, I shouted at the top of my voice, "Mother, I've got it." As chicken-pox was raging among the young people of Birdlington at that time, my mother naturally thought I had fallen a victim to the malady, but she was reassured before she had time to express her fears.

"I've got the position, and it's in an office, too."

Then I rushed to the window, where I saw Aunt Maria walking down the garden path. "Auntie," I shrieked, waving the letter, "I've got it."

"I should think you *had* got something," replied Aunt Maria, as she turned and regarded me, waiting for the next announcement.

"Come in, and I'll tell you all about it."

I had not informed the family that I had written to Mr. Foster, so their surprise was not unnatural. I now told my mother and Aunt Maria what I had done, and that I had accomplished my object.

"I don't quite see that you have accomplished your object just yet," said Aunt Maria, who was inclined to be skeptical. "Mr. Foster is good enough to say that he will see you, but when he sees you he may think you are too young. He may want some one who lives in Trenton. There are a thousand and one reasons why you may not get the position."

"There are a thousand and one why I may," I answered. "I haven't the slightest doubt about it, and I am going to Trenton at once."

"I will go with you," said my mother, "for I don't think that it would look just right for a girl of your age to be going to see a strange man alone, even on business."

"All right, mother," I answered. "I shall be glad to have you go; but, if I get the position, you know that you cannot go with me every day."

"More's the pity," said my mother, with a touch of regret in her voice.

There was a good deal of excitement in the household that evening. The children were very much interested, and seemed to agree with me that it was a foregone conclusion that I should get the position.

"It isn't the first time you have set out to seek your fortune," said Marty, referring to an incident in the past that might better have been forgotten. So I made no reply to her remark.

Trenton was about six miles by railroad from Birdlington. The track runs between the river and a creek; the latter does not go all the way to Trenton, but the river does; and many a time I have skated on its frozen surface from Birdlington to the State capital.

The morning after the receipt of the

wonderful letter, my mother and I started out for Trenton. It seemed to me that the train never went so slowly—at best it was not fast; but finally we got there, and found Mr. Foster at his hotel. He smiled benignly upon me, and addressed his conversation to my mother, explaining to her what the position was and what the hours were likely to be.

“I am afraid you will have to be here pretty early in the morning,” he said, still addressing my mother.

“It is not my mother that wants the position. It is I. I wrote you the letter about it.”

Mr. Foster turned toward me with surprise.

“You!” said he. “I had no idea it was so young a person.”

“I hope that that will not prevent my getting the position.”

“No,” said he slowly, “I don’t know that it will. You write a good hand, and you seem to have a lot of go in you. I

think I will try you. You can begin work day after to-morrow. The pay will be ten dollars a week."

I nearly fell off my chair. Ten dollars a week! If he had said five, I should have thought myself rich.

"What time in the morning can you get here?" asked Mr. Foster. "The office opens for work at about eight."

I consulted the time-table. There was a train at six, and another at eight. The six o'clock train would get me to the State House, if I walked from the station, which I proposed doing, at about seven o'clock. The eight o'clock would not get me there until nearly nine.

"I will take the six o'clock," said I, promptly. And I did.

The fare from Birdlington to Trenton was not very much, but it was something, and I did not propose spending any of my money unnecessarily. My family needed it much more than the railroad, I thought, and I decided that I would get a pass.

The superintendent of the road lived at Birdlington. I knew him well, and, as soon as I returned home, I called at his office.

"Mr. Van Schuyler," said I, "I want an annual pass to Trenton."

He looked down at me from his six feet two, and said, with an expression of amusement on his face, "Why should I give you an annual pass to Trenton?"

"Because I need it," said I. "I have just got a position there, and I don't want to spend any of my money on car fare. I have too much else to do with it."

Mr. Van Schuyler knew the situation of my affairs pretty well, and he knew that passes were dealt out liberally in those days. "I think I shall have to let you have one," he said; and he sat down at his desk and wrote it out for me.

Armed with a pass and a prospective ten dollars a week, I would not have asked odds of a Rothschild. Why, Dixey, who was several years older than I was, only got

that much, and he had to pay his board out of it. His board (he lived with the business manager of the paper) was only five dollars a week, and he sent five home. He paid for incidentals by writing poems. One year he wrote the letter-carriers' New Year's address, and got—I don't remember just what, but I dare say it was twenty-five dollars: a tidy sum for an occasional poem by an unknown poet. My earnings were all clear gain, and after my mother had become reconciled to the situation she was very proud of me; and even Aunt Maria agreed that ten dollars a week was not to be sneezed at, even if it was earned by a girl.

To get the six o'clock train for Trenton, I got up at four. There was never a time in my life that I could dress in fifteen or twenty minutes. I had a tub in my room that I had rigged up with a pipe leading outside, so that I had only to pull a cork to let the water run off. To be sure, I had to pour the water in, but that was a small

item. No porcelain tub ever gave greater satisfaction than that tin tub with its cork plug gave me. It took me nearly an hour to bathe and dress; then I had a half-hour for my breakfast, and a half-hour to get to the station, which was a little less than three-quarters of a mile from the house.

It was in September that I began work, and I did not mind getting up at four in the least; but as the days grew shorter and colder it was different. The first of the dark mornings scared me. It was as dark as night when I started out, so that Ellen, our faithful maid-of-all-work, used to walk with me as far as the village. Good, kind Ellen! Never shall I forget the breakfasts she used to cook for me by candle-light. It did not take her quite as long as it did me to dress in the morning, so that she got up later, but she always had my breakfast on time. Nothing was a trouble to her if it made me comfortable. The only time I ever saw her out of humour was one wash-day. She had a large wash to

do, but she got at it early, as she always enjoyed getting it out on the lines before her neighbours.

On this particular day, Sandy came up from the village with a huge turtle that he had ordered from Philadelphia. He told Ellen that he had invited a few friends to luncheon, and he wanted to give them turtle soup.

"Turtle soup, is it?" exclaimed Ellen. "Where are you going to get turtle soup?"

"You are going to make it," replied Sandy blandly, "and here's the turtle." With that he let the turtle loose upon the kitchen floor.

"For the love of St. Patrick!" shrieked Ellen, and sprang upon the wash-bench, overturning the tubs, and burying the turtle under the suds-soaked clothes. Only by a quick backward jump did Sandy escape the deluge. As he jumped, he made a remark about St. Patrick that Ellen did not like, and she ordered him and the turtle out of the kitchen. She was a powerful

woman and a good cook, so Sandy thought it best not to provoke her too far, and he didn't.

The turtle was put under a box in the orchard, and the guests who had been bidden to the feast that did not come off were invited out to see it. Sandy turned the box over gently, but the turtle had gone. If all that Mr. Thompson Seton says about the intelligence of beasts and reptiles be true, that turtle had heard the conversation about the soup, and had escaped from under the box rather than see itself sacrificed upon the altar of Sandy's epicurean appetite.

That was Ellen's one and only outburst while she lived with us, and who shall say that she had not provocation? I am the more amazed that she got up so cheerfully in the early mornings, for she did not go to bed with the chickens. She was "keeping company" at the time, and I am sure her "steady" stayed fairly late, for I could smell kerosene oil long after the family

had retired; and, as you know, kerosene only smells when the light is turned low.

One morning there was a thick fog when I started out, but otherwise it was light enough. In a little gully by the side of the road, I saw something. Before I could make out what it was, it had disappeared. I ran back to the house and told Ellen about it. She had no doubt as to what it was.

"It was a ghost."

I shivered.

"Was it, really?"

"Of course." It had come down from the cemetery, which was only a little way up the road, and it would go back again.

"I wish it would hurry and go back."

"It's gone back by this time, I guess," said Ellen, "but I'll go down the road with you because you're scared."

"No, I'm not. I don't believe in ghosts, but I don't want to meet another, and you may go with me if you like."

It was getting late, and we hurried down

the road. A neighbour was driving a cow in front of us.

"Good mornin'," said he; "I've just found my old cow. She got lost in the fog down in the gully."

"Oh, I'm so glad!" He regarded me with amazement. "For, then, it was a cow and not a ghost. I told you, Ellen."

But Ellen only smiled pityingly upon me. She had not been born in Ireland for nothing. She knew a ghost when I saw it. That was the first and last ghost to cross my path.

The six o'clock train got me to the State House door before seven, and often I had to wait in the cold for the janitor to open the doors. But do you think I minded that? Not a bit of it. It was part of the fun of working.

CHAPTER III

THE Adjutant-General's office was in the State House, as I have said. It was a large room, with windows overlooking the Delaware River. The Adjutant-General's desk was by one of the windows. Mine was farther back in the room. The Adjutant-General himself was a young man, and a very handsome young man at that. He had dark-brown curling hair, a long brown mustache, dark-blue eyes, and rosy cheeks. He usually wore a frock coat—Prince Alberts, we called them in those days,—and he crowned his curling hair with a wide-rimmed soft felt hat such as was worn in the army during the war. There were three other men in the office: an old man with a gray beard, a young man with a blond mustache, and a still younger man with no mustache or beard of any sort.

The blond man was a fireman as well as a government clerk, and he killed two birds with one stone by wearing his fireman's coat as an overcoat. I admired it very much, for it was lined with scarlet and ornamented with brass buttons.

There was still another man, but he was not there very long, if I remember rightly. He made a strong impression upon my mind, for I heard him say, one day, that he could place his hand upon his heart and say that he owed nothing to any man. The graybeard sighed, and said that he could place his hand upon his heart and say that he owed every man something. I fancy he had a good deal of use for his money, and that he did not get very high pay. He wore the same clothes as long as I was in the office, and I dare say that he wore them even longer than that. His collars and ties were fearfully and wonderfully made. Instead of wearing the sort of ties that most men wore, he had a piece of velvet ribbon tied under his collar. He

confided to me one day that he was very much put to it to know what to wear for a necktie, and he asked me what I could suggest.

"Why not wear a necktie?" I answered.

"A good idea," said he. "I never thought of that."

So he bought himself a real tie, and discarded the velvet ribbon from that moment.

I was the only woman or girl employed in the State House, and I was regarded with a good deal of curiosity, and, I may add, was treated with the utmost courtesy. The men knew that I was the daughter of a soldier who had given his life for his country, and they did all they could to help me. As for the Adjutant-General, he was one of the finest men I ever knew. If I had been his own sister, he could not have been kinder or more considerate.

My work was only clerical, and was not very hard. Neither was it very interesting. I had to go over all the papers of

privates as well as of officers, and copy out their records. These were turned over to Mr. Foster, who used them as material for his book.

While I got to the office very early in the morning, I did not have to stay very late. I took the four o'clock train for Birdlington, and, as soon as I arrived, I went down to the Redmonds, and usually stayed there to supper and to have a good time; for there was a houseful of young people. I have never believed in the all-work-and-no-play idea. I took all the fun that came my way, and was the better for it.

Kate Redmond, who was usually described by the Birdlingtonians as "a limb," was greatly interested in the personnel of the Adjutant-General's office. When I said that the General was young and good-looking, she declared at once that she was going to the office with me. I begged her not to, as I did not consider it businesslike; but the more I said, the more she insisted.



Louise Seavey Shinn —

“ ‘Why not wear a necktie?’ I answered.”

"You can't go with me," I said.

"I can go with you," she replied, and, sure enough, she did; and she could not have picked out a worse day in the whole year for her visit.

It was in the spring, and there was a freshet in the river. It was all right when I went up in the morning, but later in the day the water covered the railway tracks and the trains could not run.

I was writing away at my desk when the door of the office opened and Miss Kate came smiling in. Instead of looking for me, she crossed over to the General, and, in her most ingratiating manner, asked if he was the Adjutant-General. He arose, and, with his best bow, assured her he was, and that he was at her service.

Now, Kate Redmond was a very pretty girl, and was as bright as a newly minted dollar, and the General was not slow to take all this in.

"I'm sorry to trouble you," said she, 'but I am looking for my friend Miss Gil-

bert. Can you tell me which office she is in?"

As he was about to say that I was in his office, and before I could say "Here I am," she continued, "I don't know my way about the State House, and I dare say that I am very stupid, but I must see her on important business."

"Hello, Kate," said I, before the General could answer. "Here I am." And, not believing that she would have the audacity to come to the office without a valid excuse, I asked, with no little anxiety:

"What's the matter? What do you want to see me about?"

She crossed over to my desk, while the General regarded her admiringly. Frowning at me, she said:

"Don't be a silly. I told you I would come, and I came. Isn't he a dream?"

"From which you'll have a rude awakening if you're not careful." For I did not relish the idea of mixing business with pleasure to this extent. Then, turning to

the General, she said, in her most engaging manner, seating herself on a chair by my desk:

"I hope you will not mind if I sit here and wait for Nell. It is getting late, and I don't like to go home alone."

It was not a minute later than three o'clock.

"I shall be delighted," replied the General gallantly, and busied himself with the papers on his desk, though I knew that he would have liked to continue the conversation, and I am sure that Miss Kate would have been very pleased if he had done so. I tried to go on with my work, but she would whisper to me, and I could not pin my mind down to business.

Suddenly she got up and crossed to the window by the General's desk.

"Dear me!" she exclaimed, "it is as I feared. The tide seems to be rising. How in the world are we going to get home if the water is over the tracks."

"Give yourselves no uneasiness, young

ladies," said the General, rising. "I will investigate; that is the only way to know just how things are."

"You are so kind," said Kate, looking at him demurely. And he left the office. Pretty soon he came back and told us that the trains were not running, as the tracks were under water. I saw visions of a night in Trenton, and wanted to telegraph to my mother at once not to be alarmed.

"We must get home," said Kate. "I could not possibly stay all night."

"We can't walk," said I.

"There's the road, if there was only some way of driving down," said the wily Kate.

"It would give me the greatest pleasure to drive you to Birdlington," said the General promptly. "If you will wait here, I will go home and get my horse and wagon and drive you down."

"You are very kind, but we could not allow it," said Kate.

"It will be much better for us to stay here all night. I know some one who will

take us in. She is a friend of my mother's. We can go to her," said I.

"You know she has no spare room," said Kate, giving me a dig with her elbow. I did not take the hint, for I exclaimed,

"No spare room! Why she has——"

Here Kate gave me another dig, which the General did not notice, as he was getting his hat and gloves.

"It will be much better for us to go home, but I don't want to bother the General. We can go to the livery, except that I am so afraid of livery horses. They are so apt to run away."

"I must insist upon having the pleasure myself," said the General, bowing himself out.

"What's the matter with you?" said Kate in a whisper, for the clerks were pricking up their ears. "Let him drive us down. It will be lots of fun."

I quite agreed with her on this point, and began to get ready for the drive.

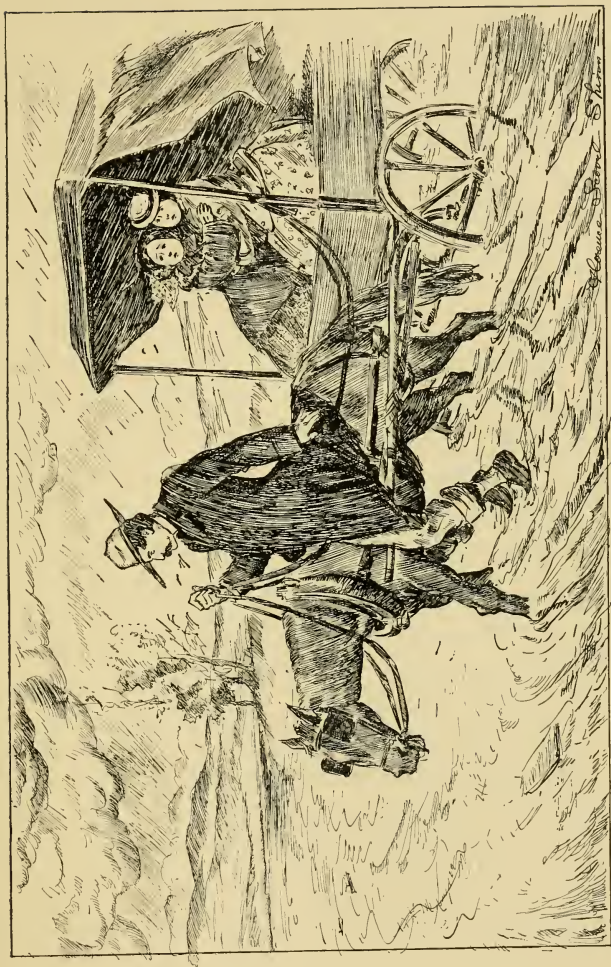
In a very short time, the General re-

turned and told us that the carriage was at the door. Downstairs we went, and climbed in with much laughter, for it was a bright, cool day, and we were very young. All went well until we arrived at the bridge across the creek, and there, to our consternation, we found that a dam had given away and that the bridge was under water.

“We’ll ford the stream,” said the General gaily, touching the horse with the whip. But the horse stood still. He refused the water. Coaxing and more whip were tried, but to no avail. We were now thoroughly alarmed, and wished that we had stayed in Trenton. The horse began to back, and we did not know what was going to happen; but the General rose to the situation.

“He can ford the stream all right. He’s done it often enough in the army, but he wants me on his back.”

Buttoning his coat tightly about him and rolling his trousers up to his knees, the General climbed out over the shafts and



“But neither the horse nor his rider had reckoned with the tide.”

sat upon the horse's back. "Now, Beauty, get along with you," and he touched the horse's sides with his spurless heels. The horse lifted his head, and stepped out into the stream with confidence. But neither he nor his rider had reckoned with the tide. In a moment his legs spread out from under him, and we were sailing down the stream. Kate screamed, and clung to me. The General did not scream, but he clung to the horse from whose back he came very near being washed off. He was a good rider, however, and a man with a cool head. Down we went, and I thought that our time had come. I had seen chicken-coops and bedsteads floating down the river at the time of freshets, but I had never seen a carriage full of people in a like predicament. Kate was so frightened that I forgot my own fears in trying to calm her.

"Let us go back," she urged frantically. As though we would not have done so if we could! There was only one way that we could go, and that was the way the tide

took us. The horse floundered and struggled bravely with the water, while the General urged him toward the bank, which was so near but yet so far. In the meantime, there was great fear that the water would fill the wagon, in which case we should have to swim for our lives, if we knew how. Alas! I did not, and I registered a vow then and there to learn the art if my life were spared. The water was up to the horse's body, and touched the General's knees. Our situation was a desperate one, and if we had not had so cool a man in command, the worst might have happened. He never for a moment admitted that we were in danger, but I knew, when I saw the colour leave his cheeks, that he was thoroughly alarmed. Everything depended upon the horse. If he gave out, we were done for.

Suddenly there was a swirl in the water. Around went the wagon, but instead of our being dragged down by it, we were turned around, and in the turning the horse's feet

got a grip on the submerged bank, and we were saved.

As the horse drew us up out of the water, Kate forgot her fears.

"Wasn't it lovely?" she exclaimed. "I never had so much fun."

"Then, when you screamed, it was for joy," I remarked sarcastically.

"Of course," said she, without wincing; and turning to the General, she said:

"We might have been food for the fishes if it had not been for you, General. You are a real hero."

With the modesty of real heroes, he denied that he had done anything, but we insisted, while he dismounted from the horse's back and wrung the water from his clothes. We wanted him to come inside the carriage, but he said that he was too wet, and that he would continue the journey on horseback. And so we entered Birdlington, where our drenched postilion attracted not a little attention.

The Redmonds' house was nearer than

ours, so we stopped there, where the General got a hot toddy and a change of clothes, while Kate and I sipped hot water and camphor as a precaution against cold.

There was no going back to Trenton that night, so the General was invited to stay over till the next day, an invitation he did not seem loath to accept. The news of our adventure was soon spread over the town, and lost nothing in the spreading. Neighbours dropped in to hear particulars, and we ended the evening with a dance in which the General was a conspicuous figure, not only as the hero of the occasion, but because of his appearance in the clothes of Captain Redmond, who was a much smaller man. If he had worn the Captain's trousers down from Trenton, there would have been no occasion for turning them up.

There was no one more concerned over our adventure than the Redmonds' cook, who remarked to Mrs. Redmond that "Miss Kate knowed the tide had rose, and she oughtn't to have went!"

CHAPTER IV

THE story of our adventure in the freshet, like the more recent rumour of Mark Twain's death, was "grossly exaggerated." One story was that we had all three mounted the horse and forded the stream. Another, that the horse had been drowned, and the carriage sunk to the bottom, while we had saved our lives only by swimming to shore. If we had really been thrown into deep water, I am afraid I should have shared the fate of the carriage.

An account of the adventure was sent to a New York daily by its Trenton correspondent, who, being a Birdlington man, selected the most popular of the town stories. My mother and Aunt Maria were greatly mortified to see not only my name, but those of

the rest of the family, in print, below what I have since learned to know as a "scare head." Here is the account, quoted from memory, but quite accurate, I believe:

FLED FROM THE FLOOD

GALLANT RESCUE FROM THE RAGING RIVER—

THE LIVES OF TWO BEAUTIFUL YOUNG

GIRLS SAVED BY THE HANDSOME

ADJUTANT-GENERAL OF NEW

JERSEY—CROWDS CHEER

THE HERO

(From Our Special Correspondent)

Then came the story, which simply told in detail what the head-lines accentuated. It was no nearer the truth than they were. In the first place, we had not fled from the flood, but plunged into it. In the second place, it was the creek, not the river. And in the third place, only one of the girls was beautiful. But what did I care? I had just as good a time, and I worshipped

beauty in others. Kate Redmond was always getting into trouble on account of her good looks, while I spent my time in getting her out of her scrapes, which I probably should not have done if I had had similar troubles of my own.

Every young man native to the town, and all the young men who came there from other towns, surrendered to her attractions. There was a good deal of feeling among the local young men against the Adjutant-General, who, they considered, had been given an unfair advantage. There was not one of the number who would not have done as much and more for one of Kate Redmond's smiles. They belittled his action, which I must admit he also did, and hinted that, if the truth were known, it was not much of an adventure after all.

The young man who took the thing most to heart was the new public schoolmaster. He was rather better-looking than the average village lad, and dressed with more heed

to fashion than was common in Birdlington. He had come as a stranger to the town. Members of the school committee knew him, but they thought it enough to pay his salary, and never troubled to invite him to their houses. The loss, I am inclined to think, was theirs.

With her quick eye for such things, Kate had noticed Warner Barclay the first day he appeared in Main Street, and made up her mind to meet him at the earliest possible moment. Nothing could have been easier if she was content to wait a while, but she was not. She wanted an unconventional meeting, and she got it. It seems that the young schoolmaster had singled her out from all the other village girls, and was as anxious to meet her as she was to meet him. He asked one of the teachers of the school whether she would perform the ceremony of introduction, but she had already discovered the good looks and amiable disposition of young Barclay, and postponed the day when these qual-

ities should be observed by another. At the post-office, one evening, the young man had the pleasure of making way for Kate at the delivery window—a courtesy that she acknowledged with a somewhat haughty inclination of the head, as who should say, “Keep your place, young man; no ‘freshness,’ if you please.” The youth raised his Panama hat, and blushed to the roots of his curling hair.

All this stand-offishness on Kate’s part was assumed. She was quite conscious of the impression she had made, and proposed to lead up to an acquaintance in her own way. Just what she was going to do she herself did not know. Fate decided for her.

About a mile and a half out of town, on a bluff overlooking the river, lived a retired naval officer with his nephews and nieces. This family was very popular in Birdlington society, and the old homestead was the objective of most of our walks. If we had plenty of time, we went along the

road through the woods and up a lane that led from the turnpike to the house; but there was a short cut down the railroad. By this way the distance was not more than a half or three-quarters of a mile, but there were a great many intersecting tracks to cross, and in those days there were many more trains plying between Camden and Amboy than there are to-day.

It happened that one day Kate was in somewhat of a hurry to see her friends on the bluff, so she took the short cut down the railway. She was very proud of her ability to walk on a rail without falling off, and was tripping gaily along, with her head in the air, when her foot caught in the V made by the crossing of two rails. It went in with so much force, up to the narrow point of the V, that she could not pull it out. She unlaced her shoe and tried to get the foot out of it, but that plan would not work. In the distance, she heard the whistle of a train, and she knew

that one would be coming around the curve before long. She thought of all her sins, past, present and future, and wondered whether she would be killed outright, or mangled and thrown aside to die in the ditch.

While she was thinking over the situation, it occurred to her to look around and see if there was any one in sight. There was no one in front of her, but, turning back, she saw the schoolmaster coming up the track. She knew that he would be by her side in a moment, so she did not call out. When he reached her, she bowed to him with a pleasant, "Good morning, Mr. Barclay," which both surprised and pleased him.

He stopped, with his hat in his hand, and she explained that she was not standing on the track because she wanted to, but because her foot was held as though in a vise. He was very much alarmed, especially as the whistling of the engine was getting louder, and tried his best to get the

foot out; but it would not come. He told me afterward that he was never so frightened in his life, but that Kate was as cool as a cucumber, and it was she who suggested the means of relief.

"Have you a penknife with you?" she asked.

He felt in his pocket and produced one.

"Now," she said, "open the sharpest blade, and cut the leather as close to the sole as possible. Go gently, and don't cut my stocking," she added, with a smile, "because I have on my best pair."

Although his hands shook with nervousness, he ran the blade carefully along the edge of the leather, and the foot was released. Kate stepped from the track only a few moments before the train passed by.

"You have saved my life," she said gaily, "but," pointing to the rails, "I have lost my sole."

After this episode, a formal introduction between Kate and the schoolmaster was unnecessary. His rescue was considered



“‘You have saved my life,’ she said gaily, ‘but,’ pointing to the rails,
‘I have lost my sole.’”

even more interesting than that of which the Adjutant-General was the hero, and the town was thrilled with the story. The only person who did not seem to be particularly excited over the matter was Kate. She took it very calmly, to all outward appearances, but I fancy she had had a pretty anxious quarter of an hour on that railroad track, but no one would have suspected it from her manner.

The schoolmaster felt that he was at a disadvantage because he did not wear the aureole of the soldier. He had been too young to fight, even as an emergency man, and in those days, just after the war, soldiers were still the favoured gallants. Then, again, the Adjutant-General's exploit had been so much more picturesque than his. He had merely taken out his penknife and cut the sole of a shoe from the upper, while the Adjutant-General had leaped upon a horse and forded a swollen stream. To be sure, the dexterous application of the penknife had saved Kate Red-

mond's life, while the fording of the stream was merely a matter of accommodation.

Kate fully realised that the schoolmaster had saved her, but, after all, it was so unromantic. She did invite young Barclay to call upon her and receive the thanks of the family, and they were getting on famously until the Adjutant-General appeared upon the scene. The schoolmaster was good-looking enough—he had unusually regular features and rather curling hair—but he was pale, and wore no mustache. Smooth-shaven faces were not the fashion in those days as they are to-day, and we girls all agreed that the Adjutant-General's long mustache, brilliant colour, and dark-brown ringlets were too beautiful for words.

It was not many days after the fording of the stream that the Adjutant-General drove from Trenton to pay us his respects. To me? Oh, no! To Kate Redmond.

It was late in the afternoon, and I happened to be staying a while with Kate on

my way home. We were in her room in the Mansard roof when we heard the "buggy" drive up. We nearly broke our necks looking out of the window, and it was as much as we could do to keep from calling out a welcome.

"Hurry downstairs, Kate," I exclaimed eagerly.

"Not much," said she, with a toss of the head. "It will do him good to wait."

Then she went to the mirror and arranged her hair, tied a fresh bit of lace around her throat, and dabbed some powder on her nose. In the meantime, I was stretching my neck out of the window. Could I believe my eyes? The General, instead of coming up the steps and ringing the bell, deliberately crossed the street and began pacing up and down the sidewalk. I told the news to Kate, and she joined me at the window.

"What's the matter with him? Why doesn't he come over?"

We watched and watched, while the

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General walked and walked. From being amused, Kate began to get angry. Once he looked up at the top windows, but we sprang back so quickly, he could not possibly see us. For at least an hour the General paraded up and down. Kate was furious. She was not used to being treated that way. She was so angry that I could not help laughing at her, which only made matters worse. "I will not look at such a simpleton," said she; and, sitting down in her rocking-chair, she began to dig the wall with her Louis XIV. heels. I can see the big hole now that she dug through paper and plaster, while I at the lookout reported the General's movements. "He's coming over!" I exclaimed delightedly, at the end of an hour.

"Well, he can't see me if he is," said Kate, with an angry toss of her head—at the same time taking furtive glances at the mirror to see whether her hair was not too much out of crimp, or that the powder had not disappeared from her nose.

"He won't see me either," I exclaimed, for he has got into his 'buggy' and is driving off!"

"What!"

Kate could hardly believe her ears. She jumped up, and we hung together over the window-sill. Sure enough, off he drove, with his slouch-hat well down over his eyes, and not so much as a glance backward.

"Well, I never!" gasped Kate.

"Nor I either," I assented, regardless of grammar.

When Kate and the General met some-time later, it took a good deal of argument on his part to make his peace. It seems that, on the way to her house, he had met one of Kate's admirers, who, surmising his intention, and being a bit jealous of the gallant soldier, had "put up a job" on him, as is the way of jealous boys.

"Going to see Kate Redmond?" inquired the boy.

"What if I am?" replied the General, somewhat nettled.

"You won't find her in."

"Indeed?"

"No, indeed. I just met her going out to Nell Gilbert's, but she said she'd be back in a moment, so you might wait."

"Thank you for the suggestion," said the General, not without a touch of irony.

As the mischievous boy cut across lots into the open country, and could not see him, the General decided that he would wait. Preferring the fresh air, he waited outside, with what result we already know. He was quite as annoyed as we were. When the explanation was made, the General was the indignant one. Kate was pleased, but it would not have gone well with that boy if she had known who he was. The General's fingers tingled to box his ears, but he could not remember his face, as their meeting had been so short. Kate had her suspicions, and boldly accused one of her youngest admirers; but he looked straight into her eyes while he "denied the allegation and defied the allegator."

CHAPTER V

THE schoolmaster was very much disturbed by the General's frequent visits at the Redmonds'. One day, much to my surprise, he joined me as I was eating my noonday sandwich in the State House grounds. At first I thought that he had come to see me, and, while I was flattered by the attention, I did not like social interruptions in business hours. But this was the luncheon hour, so I said nothing. I soon found out, however, that I was not the object of the schoolmaster's visit. He wanted to pump me regarding the Adjutant-General's feelings toward Kate Redmond, but I was not to be pumped. While I was used to being the confidante of both sides in affairs of the heart, I resented being questioned about my employer, for Mr. Foster's business being now finished, I

was working on the records for the Adjutant-General.

"I do not discuss my employer's personal affairs with any one," said I, at the end of an appeal. Shaking the crumbs of my sandwich on the grass, I blew up the paper bag and burst it with a bang that made the schoolmaster start, for he was in a nervous condition.

"Hang the Adjutant-General," said the schoolmaster. "I don't want to know how much he cares for her—how much does *she* care for *him*?" and he poked the gravel viciously with his umbrella.

"That is another matter," I answered; for business was not on this side of the question. "I'm sure she cares a good deal for him."

The schoolmaster groaned.

"That is, in her way. She never cares very long for any one—any man, I mean. She says there's safety in numbers, variety's the spice of life, and all such things."

He groaned again.

"Then you have seen her care for a man this much before?"

"Lots of times. It's her way. She's a born flirt."

"I suppose I might as well throw myself in the river and end it all," he said gloomily, looking out over the Delaware. I was younger than he was, and I took him at his word. I argued the question with him, and wound up by saying, "That would be a very foolish thing to do, for you would be declaring your defeat and leaving everything to your hated rival." (I had read the phrase "hated rival" somewhere, and liked the sound of it.) The school-master's proper pride came to his rescue.

"You are quite right," said he, withdrawing his eyes from the river. "I shall live and fight it out. He need not think that, because he has a long mustache and can wear shoulder-straps, he can down me. A teacher is as good as a soldier any day. I may be young, but I'm not going to be flung aside for a man who has only a mus-

tache and shoulder-straps to his credit." The schoolmaster's eye shot fire, and the colour mounted to his cheeks. "I wish that these were the days of the duel. I'd challenge him. I'd call him out——"

"Out where?"

"Out here, right now." He was getting very much excited. "I wouldn't wait for seconds and all that rubbish, but I'd draw on him at sight——"

"It is not a question of money." He did not hear me. He was listening to his own voice.

"Defend yourself, sir," and he thrust his tightly rolled umbrella at an imaginary foe.

An old farmer and his wife, making a visit to the State House, came down the path at this moment. They looked at the fire-eating schoolmaster, and fled. At the same moment, the Adjutant-General, who had been looking out of his office window, appeared upon the scene.

"Oh, it is you, Mr. Barclay; spearing for eels?" said the Adjutant-General, rais-

ing his sombrero. "I recognised Miss Gilbert, and feared that some stranger was trying to frighten her. You know, all sorts of queer people get in here."

The schoolmaster sheathed his umbrella.

"Miss Gilbert is fortunate in having so gallant a protector," said he, and, raising his hat, he walked haughtily up the path. I was glad to see him go, for I was just young enough to think that there might have been bloodshed, though the men were unarmed save for the schoolmaster's umbrella.

"Nice fellow," said the General. "A little queer, though, like most school-teachers. No snap."

"No snap!" He would have thought that the schoolmaster was not wanting in "snap," if he had heard him a few minutes before.

When I reached Birdlington, late that afternoon, Kate was at the station to meet me. She could hardly wait till I got off the train to tell me her news.

"I've got lots to tell you. The schoolmaster——"

"Hush; wait a moment. You don't want the whole town to know."

"To know what?"

"That the schoolmaster's in love with you and madly jealous of the General."

"Who told you?"

"The schoolmaster."

"Well, upon my——"

"He did not exactly tell me, but he might as well have told me. He wanted to commit suicide, kill the General——"

"Oh, lovely! Tell me everything."

We were now climbing the broad stairs from the station that led to the main street.

"Isn't that enough? What more do you want? Have you seen him?"

"I should say so. He came straight to the house from Trenton, and said I would have to choose between him and the General. I told him I had chosen. He nearly fainted. 'Which is it?' he demanded.

'That is my affair,' I replied. 'I'm not giving myself away.'

"Have you really chosen?" I asked.

"Of course I have."

"Which?"

"That's telling."

For once, Kate did not take me into her confidence. I knew, however, that she was only trying to tease me, or that she had not really made up her mind.

"The schoolmaster's all very well," said she, "but I'm not going to put up with his melancholy-Dane manner. I'm no Ophelia. As though I was going to stop having fun to please any one man! No, no! If Master Barclay is not careful, I will turn my back on him, and *then* see what he will do."

"I know what he will do, well enough. He as much as told me."

"Did he?" (joyfully). "What did he say?"

"He as much as said that he would jump into the river."

"I guess he'd jump out again in a hurry."

That's all bluff. I may be only sixteen years old, but *I know men.*"

I was filled with awe at her knowledge of the world. We were at the Redmonds' gate by this time, and looking up the road saw a solitary horseman in the distance. As he cantered up, we recognised the General. Kate blushed with pleasure.

Bending low over his saddle, the General saluted us with a flourish of his hat. His horse, touched with the spurs, pranced and plunged about, while the General sat as calm and erect as Buffalo Bill. Finally, he drew up by the curb and stated his errand. On the next evening there was to be grand opera at the Trenton opera house. A special train was to run up from Birdlington, and the General begged for the pleasure of escorting Miss Kate. She had fully made up her mind to go. In fact, quite a party of us were going; but she kept the General in a state of doubt, at last consenting that he might be one of the party.

Couldn't he drive her up in his buggy?



“‘I may be only sixteen years old, but *I know men.*’”

No, he couldn't. It was with the party or nothing. Anything was preferable to nothing. So he promised to be on hand for the train; and he was.

Excitement ran high over this opera party. With us, it was what is known as a "Jersey treat"—we paid each for our own ticket. Not a great expense, for the best seats were only a dollar and a half. The Redmonds had often been to the opera in New York, and they knew all about it. I had never been. Up to that time, opera and theatre were a sealed book to me, as far as actual experience went. I had read much about them in books and newspapers, but up to that time an "old folks" concert or the tuneful "bell-ringers" were the beginning and the end of my acquaintance with the stage.

The Redmonds, our arbiters of fashion, said that I must have an opera bonnet. Must I, indeed! Where was I going to get a bonnet of any sort, and on such short notice. And if I did get one, what was I

going to do with it? I had never worn a bonnet and never wanted to, but I bowed to the inevitable. Lou Redmond, who was as good as a milliner, indeed—better than our local talent—said she would make me one if I would furnish the materials. She went with me to buy them. First, we bought a “frame,” a thing of wire and gauze; and then the trimming. I insisted upon black as being inconspicuous, so we got a lot of black tulle. It looked rather funereal when finished, but I objected to feathers or flowers as being too gay and not suited to my plain clothes. We compromised on some simple gilt ornaments. A gilt leaf was sewn to the top of the bonnet, and the long strings of tulle were fastened together well below the chin with a cluster of gilt leaves; small grape-leaves they must have been, for I remember the curling tendrils. Every one declared the bonnet, when completed, to be a work of art. I’m sure it was, though my judg-

ment in the matter was not worth much. This was its shape:



The point came in front and the back fitted over the "waterfall." Unfortunately for the fitting, I did not wear a "waterfall." My hair was held back by a "round comb" and confined in a "net." The consequence was that the bonnet had no purchase, and the point was as likely to be on a line with my ear as on a line with my nose. I suffered tortures with that bonnet, notwithstanding the efforts of every one on the special train to keep it straight. At last we got to the opera house and to our seats, which were in the front row.

The opera was "The Barber of Seville," and the lamented Parepa-Rosa was the prima donna. The names of the singers who supported her were well known in those days, but only the older generation

of music lovers will recall them to-day. Ferranti was the baritone, Testa the tenor, Carl Rosa the conductor, and George Colby the orchestra. Colby presided at a piano, and Rosa "conducted" him, baton in hand. It was primitive enough as to surroundings, but I wish that I could as much enjoy a performance at the Metropolitan Opera House to-day. Parepa-Rosa sang Zerlina in a crinoline, looped up over a "balmoral skirt" as was the fashion of the day; the others wore the costumes of the period represented. In the singing lesson, Parepa-Rosa sang "Katie's Lesson," giving as an encore "Five o'Clock in the Morning"—a ballad she had made famous—by special request. Mme. Parepa-Rosa was a woman of more than ample proportions, but from that large throat and deep chest issued a voice of unusual sweetness and birdlike quality. Large as she was, she was young and girlish, and she sang the ballad with delightful archness. How few know that



Florence Sevel Skinn

“Mme. Parepa-Rosa was a woman of more than ample proportions, but from that large throat issued a voice of unusual sweetness and birdlike quality.”

old song to-day! But every one knew it then, and loved it as they loved the singer.

I enjoyed the performance tremendously, and applauded with might and main—much to the detriment of my opera bonnet. I applauded it over my eyes once, down my back another time, and, finally, at the end of the ballad, I was so carried away with enthusiasm that it fell upon the floor, where I pounded my heels into it in an ecstasy of delight. At the end of the opera it was little more than a rag. The tulle was in shreds, while the grape leaves were beaten flat. I picked up the leaves from the floor and rolled them up with my programme, as souvenirs of a great night.

"You'll have to go home bare-headed," said Kate, regarding with dismay the roll of tulle on the floor.

"I'd go home barefooted if I could hear it all over again," was my infatuated reply.

Sitting in the balcony, where he had a

full view of Kate and the General, was the schoolmaster. He never took his eyes off them, but Kate, who must have seen him, paid no attention. As we left the opera house, he stood glaring in the lobby. At the door, Kate turned to the General and thanked him for his escort.

"But I am going back to Birdlington with you," he replied, thinking that she misunderstood his intention.

"I could not permit it. It would be too much. There are so many of us that it is not at all necessary." And, taking the arm of the schoolmaster, whose face brightened as the General's darkened, she said good-night, and trotted off on her French heels, while we followed.

It was a great night. I shall never forget it.



Florence Scott Shinn —

“I enjoyed the performance tremendously, and applauded with might and main—much to the detriment of my opera bonnet.”

CHAPTER VI

THERE were not many excitements in Birdlington, but still there were some delightful people living there—an unusual number, considering the size of the town. In years gone by, it had been a fashionable watering-place, some man having discovered a spring of strong medicinal properties in the town. And then there was always the aureole of the Bonapartes about the place, for King Joseph, the brother of the great Emperor Napoleon, had chosen it for his home. The Bonapartes were long before my day, but my mother and Aunt Maria remembered them well. After Joseph left the place, his nephew, Prince Lucien Murat, a son of the marshal, continued to make it his home. The house that he lived in is still standing, as are several other houses built

by this little band of French exiles. They are of the French style of architecture, and look as if they might have been transplanted from the old quarters of Versailles.

Prince Murat had married an American woman, a Miss Fraser, of one of the Carolinas. She may have had money when he married her, but it did not take him long to spend it. Madame Murat, as she was called, set up a school, and the better class of Birdlington girls attended it. Of course, the Prince did nothing to help the family fortunes. Was he not a Prince, even though he was not of ancient lineage? He gambled, assisted at cock-fights, did a little shooting, and all this kept him busy. I have heard Aunt Maria, who knew the Murat family well, tell an amusing anecdote of the Prince's unpractical ideas—that is, it is amusing to us now, but it was certainly not amusing to Mme. Murat at the time. It seems that the mainstay of the little Murats was the

milk of a fine cow that Mme. Murat had bought out of her frugal means. One day, the Prince came home from the village tavern, where he spent the most of his time, and said to his wife, with great satisfaction,

"My dear, I have made such a bargain!"

"What is it?" inquired that good lady, catching some of his enthusiasm.

"I have given our cow for a fine setter dog. What do you think of that?"

The tears which she was unable to control proved, without words, what she thought of the bargain. The Prince tried to console her by promising to keep the family provided with game, which, after all, he argued, was better for the children than milk.

Birdlington was full of anecdotes of the Bonapartes and Murats in my early days. All that was left of the household of the ex-King of Spain was his barber and an old soldier, by the name of Rabeau, who

had fought at Waterloo. He died soon after we came to live at the old place, but the barber lived many years longer. He kept a candy and toy and tobacco store on the sidewalk, in front of which he spent most of his time reading French newspapers many weeks old. He sat in an old wooden chair, tilted back on its hind legs, with his newspaper held close to his eyes. All day long he sat that way, reading news of the home across the seas. His dress was very much like that of the old soldiers one sees at Napoleon's tomb. Yet he was not a soldier, but only the barber of an ex-king.

Louis Napoleon was once a visitor at Birdlington, and he took back to France with him one of the villagers who had taught him how to swim and was teaching the same accomplishment to the boys and girls of my generation. This man, whom I will call Long John, for convenience, was a good deal of a character. He had known my maternal grandfather, who, I

imagine, was a man of a good deal of "temperament." "The old Major was a devil," said he, and, turning to Dixey, "you're his very spit and image."

I enjoyed talking to Long John about his European experiences. He went as a sort of body-servant to Louis Napoleon, who was vastly entertained by his original observations. One day, in London, the Emperor-to-be asked him what he would most like to see.

"Well, Prince," said Long John, rubbing his head reflectively, "I think I'd like to see a dow'ger most of all. I've heard such a lot about dow'gers, I'd like to tell the folks at home what they're like."

"Very well, John," said the Prince, "you shall see a dowager, and more than one. You stand behind my chair at dinner to-night, and I'll let you pass the soup to one of the greatest dowagers in all England."

"By crackie," said Long John, in relating the anecdote, "I thought I'd drop the

soup-plate when I clapped my eye on that dow'ger. Why, she warn't nothin' to look at, at all; a skinny old thing, all covered with diments. 'Well, Prince,' said I, when I got him alone, 'I don't want none of your dow'gers, if *that's* what they're like. Give me a Jersey girl every time.'

When Louis Napoleon executed his famous *coup d'état*, the Murats plucked up courage and decided to join him in France and share in his good fortune. He had not asked them to come, but they felt sure that pride of family would compel him to set them on their feet. It was one thing to decide to go, and another thing to go. They had not the price of a single ticket among them, but they appealed to the people of Birdlington, from whom the Prince, by his rose-coloured statements, succeeded in "borrowing" several hundred dollars.

I have heard my mother and Aunt Maria tell graphic tales of their theatrical

departure from Birdlington. The Prince and Mme. Murat were decked out in new clothes, bought for the occasion, while the children wore garments fashioned by the friendly neighbours out of old clothes, liveries, and what not, found in the closets of the Murat house.

At the time of the Murats' departure there was a sale of their effects. Among the rubbish was an old scrap-book made by Mme. Murat. It consisted of pictures from illustrated papers, an engraving or two, fugitive poems, some pasted in, others copied out in the owner's fine hand-writing, the fashion of the day in feminine penmanship. Intrinsically, it was not worth two cents, but, sentimentally, it was worth a few shillings to a young lady who had been a pupil of Mme. Murat's. She was very anxious to secure the scrap-book, so she asked the village doctor if he would bid on it for her. This he agreed to do. Then, to make assurance doubly sure, she went to the clergyman

and asked him also to bid on it. This he agreed to do. The scrap-book was held up by the auctioneer, who said that he had been informed that a certain young lady was very desirous of possessing it, but that he could show no favours. It would be knocked down to the highest bidder. Most of the lookers-on shrugged their shoulders and turned away until the next lot should be offered. The only bidders were the doctor and the clergyman, neither of whom knew who the other was bidding for. The young lady did not attend the sale. The bidding began at five cents, and jumped to "two bits" (two shillings), then up to a dollar. The doctor was determined. The clergyman was not one of those to put his hand to the plow and look back; but, when the doctor finally said "five dollars," the clergyman refused to add another penny, for he thought it wrong to spend so much money for a mere scrap-book, when a barrel of sermons might be had for less. So the treasure

was knocked down to the doctor, who bore it to the young lady in triumph.

"I had a hard fight for it," said he. "There was only one other bidder, our good rector, who seemed set on getting it. If it had not been for him I could have had it for ten cents."

It was many years later before the young lady told this story on herself. She was afraid of being called a fool at the time, but it was too good a story to keep forever. When she was old enough to see the humour of the situation, she told it. I may add, by the way, that it cooled her ardour for auction sales. Their red flags were the reminder of a painful incident.

It is no uncommon thing to hear of a woman bidding against herself at an auction, but I never before heard of one who set two men bidding against each other in her behalf.

I do not know why I should have introduced these pages about the Bonapartes and Murats, except that the subject is so

closely associated with my Birdlington days. It really came in apropos of society in Birdlington in my youth. There were no kings in exile there then, but there were a great many interesting and cultivated people. There was, among others, an artist who had studied in Italy, and had built an Italian villa of wood on a bluff overlooking the river. He was a widower with two charming daughters, both of whom inherited much of his talent. One, however, took more kindly to music; the other followed in her father's footsteps, and has made a reputation on both sides of the ocean. The drawing-room of the Waugh villa was embellished with a number of statues standing in niches. These statues, while admired by the friends of the artist, were disapproved of by some of the villagers as being nude. No one frowned upon them more severely than the village charwoman. One day, after a house-cleaning, when the family entered the drawing-room, they found all

the statues standing in their niches draped in the cast-off clothes of the family. The clothing was put on regardless of sex. Powers's Greek Slave wore a frock-coat; an Apollo Belvedere was draped in a "balmoral" skirt; a Cupid and Psyche had a Scotch plaid shawl pinned over them. The effect was weird in the extreme. The statues looked like so many scare-crows. Mr. Waugh sent for the charwoman and pretended to be very angry.

"Did you cover up my beautiful statues with those old clothes?" he asked severely.

"Yes, sir, I did, and I'll do it agin. Statoos, you call 'em. I call 'em low-down images. You'll never ketch me workin' in the room with them unless they're kivered. I'm a decent woman, I am, and I don't hold with any such indecency."

"Don't you know that those are copies of classic statues among the most beautiful that were ever made?" said the artist.

"Beautiful?" with scorn. "That shows what kind of a man you are. You oughter be ashamed, and you with young datters—a nice way to bring them up!"

"Don't you know that the galleries of Europe are filled with statues, and that people from all over the world go to see them?"

"Yurru!—o' course! Them savages don't know no better." And gathering up her skirts, she swept out of the room without having once turned her eyes upon the "statoos."

Mrs. Julia Ward Howe had a married sister living in Birdlington, to whom she made occasional visits. I remember that, on one of these visits, she was asked to read an essay before a select company of Birdlingtonians. She selected a subject that would have given the Concord School of Philosophy food for thought. It was some current Boston "ism"—I don't remember just what, but I do remember its effect upon her audience. The reading

was in the early afternoon, and the ladies brought their sewing. At first they tried to understand, but they soon gave that up as an impossibility. When Mrs. Howe gave a decided emphasis to any line or word, they looked up from their needles and nodded their heads approvingly. The old lady who kept the dames' school slept soundly until some emphasised line aroused her, and then, to show that she had been listening, and that she realised that, as a school-teacher, she should be a leader among the women, she would exclaim, "How true!" Once she said "How true" to a proposition that Mrs. Howe was proving to be false, but, as she dropped off to sleep again immediately after her remark, the essayist's look of astonishment was lost on her.

The senior physician of the village and the rector were the only men present, and, having the dignity of their sex to uphold, they looked very wise. The doctor stroked his beard, pressed the

handle of his cane against his smooth-shaven upper lip, and at least looked as though he understood it all. The rector had a far-away look in his eye, but he was on the alert for unorthodox doctrines. When they were expounded, he knitted his brows and toyed with the gold cross that he wore on his watch-ribbon; but he said nothing. Perhaps it was as well.

In the evening, there was an entertainment in honour of Mrs. Howe. The chief warden of the church, who was also the basso profundo of the choir, sang "Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep" with effect so realistic that Kate Redmond asked one of her admirers to bring her a life-preserver. A young divinity student sang "Jesus, Lover of My Soul" to the tune of "When the Swallows Homeward Fly"; a young lady from the neighbouring village of Crosswicks played a piano-forte solo in which she crossed her hands with unusual effect. Indeed, it seemed to me that most of the right-hand



“ . . . crossed her hands with unusual effect.”

notes were played by the left hand, and most of those to the left were played by the right hand. She certainly was ambidextrous, and, when I remarked upon it, she said that, as a small child, she sat with her hands crossed, and thereby gained facility. The piece was called "Monastery Bells," if I remember rightly, and was a great parlour favourite in those days. I think that it was the cross-hands part that made it so popular. It looked a difficult thing to do, but I dare say that it was easy enough if you only knew the trick.

The evening ended with charades. We asked Mrs. Howe, as the guest of honour, to choose the word. She suggested "Transcendental." Nothing could have been easier. "Trance" was the first syllable, and Kate Redmond was chosen for the part of the unconscious lady, which she came near spoiling by an imitation snore. "Send" was the next syllable, and "Dental" the last. That was easy enough.

Dixey was the victim of toothache, while the divinity student acted the part of dentist. There was the word, sure enough, but how many in that audience knew its meaning?

You will see, by this chapter, that we were not without our social excitements in Birdlington. Kate Redmond called them tame; but then, the Redmonds had spent part of a winter in New York, and they were expected to be critical.

CHAPTER VII

I WAS in the office at Trenton for a year, and then the work that I had set out to do was done. I could not be idle. I could not afford to be, for one thing, and I did not enjoy having nothing to do, for another. Dixey, being a newspaper man, and having a wide acquaintance among prominent men in the State, was appealed to to find me a new position. He had about made up his mind by this time that I "meant business," so he agreed to do what he could for me. He could not think of anything, however; but I could.

At first, I thought that I would write poetry or cane chairs—I was not very particular as to which, nor had I any aptitude for either profession. The way I came to think of these two things, seemingly so far apart, was this:

While he was reporting the doings of the State legislature at Trenton, Dixey discovered a poet. She was a poor woman, who caned chairs for a living in the intervals of housework. Dixey, who was something of a poet himself, found that the woman possessed the real fire. He interested himself in her, published a volume of her poems, and sold them by subscription, thereby making more money for her in the space of a few short weeks than she had ever seen in all the years of her life. This seemed to me an easy way of earning a living, and so I wrote some verses in imitation of "Clementine's." With no little pride, I showed them to Dixey, expecting that he would say at once that he would get them published for me and make me a tidy sum of money. I handed him the verses one Sunday—he always spent his Sundays at home—but I did not tell him who had written them. I wanted to get his unprejudiced praise before I confessed. He began to read.

"Whoever wrote this stuff," said he, "is either a knave or a fool. They are a base imitation of 'Clementine,' and they are more base than imitation."

"The person who wrote those verses," said I, in a voice filled with indignation, "is neither a knave nor a fool. They were written by a particular friend of mine, and I would thank you to give them back to me."

"Your particular friend should be more particular the next time she—no one but a she could write such twaddle—ventures into verse." And he returned the manuscript, which had been copied out by another hand.

That experience put a damper on my poetic aspirations for the time, at any rate; certainly upon any thought of poetry as a bread-winner. I decided that it might be more in my line to cane chairs, but that was less to my taste. So two possible roads to fortune were closed.

I cast about me, and decided that I

should like to go into the United States Mint, in Philadelphia. The pay was the same that I had been getting, and the hours were easy. There were not many things that a woman could do at that time, and mint positions were regarded as great prizes.

It seemed as though I were bound to get what I wanted in those days. The mint position was obtained, and I got a pass over the railroad to Philadelphia. Passes were easy to get. The head of the family of any one connected in the remotest with the railroad merely had to go up to the ticket office and ask for them. I have seen Kate Redmond bring ten girls at a time from a neighbouring town, by saying to the ticket seller, "Ten passes to Birdlington, please," and they were immediately handed out without a word of protest. Times have changed since those happy days.

For a month or more I went up and down by the railroad, and all was well

until the unexpected happened. One Sunday, when Dixey was at home, he made the suggestion that the family move to Newark so that my mother could have the benefit of his full salary—ten dollars per week. He could live at home. Her pension would about pay the rent, and we should all be together—that is, if I could get something to do in Newark, which I believed that I could when the time should come. We talked the matter over carefully, and made the margin of the religious weekly to which my mother subscribed black with figures. Dixey proved—at least, to his and our satisfaction—that ten dollars a week in Newark would be equal to twenty dollars in Birdlington. In his own home, he would be inspired to work, and could do much more than in a boarding-house. It was a pleasing argument, and we fell in with it.

My mother was eager to go for some reasons, yet doubtful on other accounts. She would have Dixey at home, and then

the schools in Newark offered opportunities for the younger children that were not to be had in Birdlington. In many respects, the country was a better place for the children; but then, again, she felt that she was standing in Aunt Maria's light. If we did not live at Fair View, she could rent it for a good price, and it was her only source of revenue. Aunt Maria was generous and the most loyal of sisters. Blood to her was not only thicker than water; it was thicker than molasses. In fact, it was the thickest thing in the world, and to be her sister, or her niece, or her nephew was a bond that nothing could break. She argued against the Newark move, but Dixey carried the day.

After he had gained my mother's consent, he confessed that he had been looking at a house with an eye to business. He said that it was in the suburbs of Newark, that there was a bit of ground around it, and that it was quite new—in fact, it was not finished yet, but if we would take it

in its unfinished state the rent would be much less than in other circumstances.

"How unfinished is it?" asked Aunt Maria.

"Well, let me see," said Dixey. "The top floor is not plastered, and the cellar isn't dug. But that's nothing. We can easily get a mason to plaster it, and I can dig the cellar in the evenings when I come home from the office."

My mother gasped in amazement. Aunt Maria, to whom Dixey was as the apple of her eye, arose from her chair almost too astonished to speak.

"You dig a cellar! It would be digging your grave. Not while your mother and I are alive will you do any such foolish thing as that."

My mother was equally determined; so the unfinished house was discarded, to Dixey's disappointment, for I think he was rather looking forward to that strenuous evening work.

It was decided that the family should

go to Newark, and Dixey was authorised to look out for a house with a cellar already dug and rooms plastered. In the meantime, I continued going up and down to my work in Philadelphia. I was then about sixteen years of age, and was rather an independent young person—quite the most independent and quite the youngest in the Mint.

There were various departments in the Mint, and I was assigned to the one in which the gold coins were weighed. Twenty or thirty women were employed in this department, mostly widows or orphans of soldiers who had fought in the war; and there were some who had been appointed because of a political pull. It seemed to me that there were a good many old people, but that may have been because I was so young that I misjudged their years. They were a timid lot, nervous and anxious lest they should lose their places. On pay day, the employees signed their names in a big book

in the presence of the superintendent. A number of the women who could write perfectly well were so nervous, and their hands shook so from excitement over what they regarded as a ceremony, that they were obliged to make their mark. I astonished them all by signing my name in a big, bold hand, much bigger and bolder than my wont, just to show them that I was not nervous. I would also have a few words of conversation with the superintendent during the performance. I could see the women's admiration of my courage.

They all stood in awe of the head of our department, a lady who had been in the Mint for seventeen years, and who drew a salary double that of any one of us who merely weighed gold. I respected her, but I did not fear her, and talked with her as I would with any other woman I might know. I found her most amiable, and I think she rather liked the way I treated her, though it must have surprised her at first, it was so unusual.

The work of weighing gold was not very arduous, nor was it very interesting. We sat in high chairs at long tables, with a pair of nicely adjusted scales in front of each weigher. We laid an unstamped coin on the scale, and, if it was too light, tossed it into a basket on one side, and, if it was too heavy, we rubbed it gently with a file. This filing made a lot of gold dust, which was very precious. There had been a good deal of pilfering of this gold dust before I came into the Mint, and many precautions were now taken to prevent it. One of the ways of stealing the dust had been to grease the hair and rub the dust off the hands into it. A good deal could be carried away in this manner. In my time greased hair was forbidden, and the hands had to be washed in basins with sieve attachments before we left the Mint.

When gold was scarce, we were set at making little bags of canton flannel to hold it when it began to come in again. I disliked sewing very much, even the easy



Agnes Carol Thompson

“I would sing as many as twenty verses.”

task of making bags. The women thought me very entertaining, and they agreed to sew my bags if I would amuse them. This I was only too pleased to do, for they were easily amused. I had no voice to speak of, but I was good at tunes, and had a large repertoire which I could draw upon for singing, whistling, or playing on my "round comb" by putting a piece of soft paper over the keys and blowing. Then, I was quite accomplished with the jews-harp, an instrument of torture one seldom sees nowadays.

Strange to say, the women liked my singing the best. I suppose that it was because they got the words as well as the music. The most popular song in my repertoire was one to which I attached the name of each woman in turn. By so doing, I would often sing as many as twenty verses, to the never-failing delight of my auditors. For instance, if one of the women was named Lucy, I would sing:

"Oh, Sister Lucy, and don't you want to go,
And leave this world of trouble and sorrow here
below?

"If you've any trouble on your mind,
If you've any trouble on your mind,
Just ask the Lord what you must do,
If you've any trouble on your mind."

Then in as impressive a voice as I could
assume:

"Bow down, kneel down,
When you've any trouble on your mind."

This was all of the song, as far as I know.
I think my brother Sandy picked it up from
the negroes in the South during the war.
I had never heard it before, and I have
never heard it since. Small loss, I hear
you say.

CHAPTER VIII

THE family had moved to Newark, and, after much debate, it was decided that I should board in Philadelphia until such time as some work could be found for me in the former city. I hated to part from my family, but the idea of boarding alone in Philadelphia was not without its excitement. A house was chosen on Walnut Street, where a friend of my mother's boarded. It was within easy walking-distance of the Mint, and I was allowed to go home to luncheon, a privilege not generally extended. I found that I could get it only by special permission of the superintendent, so I went to him without delay and stated the case.

"Mr. Snowdon," said I, "cold luncheons do not agree with me."

"Really?"

"No, sir, they do not. My boarding-house is at Tenth and Walnut, and I can get a comfortable hot luncheon there if you will allow me."

"I do not wish to stand between you and a hot luncheon, so I think I had better let you go; but you must not take more than an hour. If you do, I shall have to withdraw the permission."

"Thank you very much; I will be back well within the hour." And I was.

I paid five dollars a week for my room and board. The room was small, but it was on the street and had a big window, and the food was bountiful and good. I had a great many friends in Philadelphia, so that time did not hang heavy on my hands. The artist who had lived in Birdlington was now living with his two daughters in West Philadelphia, and the Redmond girls were constantly at their house. We had jolly times there. I shall not forget a party that they once gave. The Redmonds came down for it, and

Kate Redmond, with her usual inventive-ness, dressed up one of the artist's lay figures in women's clothes and set it up in the men's dressing-room. It was funny enough to hear the men, as they entered and discovered what they naturally supposed was a lady standing near the dressing-table. They would start back, one foot on the threshold, with many apologies for the intrusion. A smothered giggle from down the hall, where Kate Redmond and I were posted to see the fun, reassured them.

We heard a great shout from the room later in the evening, and learned from one of the men that, when he saw another man coming up the hall, he put his arm around the figure and bent its head over on his shoulder. The other man was covered with confusion.

"Don't mention it, old chap," said the joker; "we don't mind in the least." And then he turned the lay figure, with its staring eyes and painted cheeks, around to

the light. It was then that the shouts of laughter came down the hall.

"I dare you to carry it downstairs and dance with it in the drawing-room," said Kate Redmond. The young man, not to be "stumped," took the thing in his arms and waltzed quite around the room with it before she—or shall I say it?—was discovered. He was very rude to it, too, and bumped it against people and chairs in his mad whirl.

"Who is that extraordinary woman?" inquired one of the older ladies. "She must have been drinking, to waltz in that mad way."

"She is only intoxicated with the music," said Kate Redmond. "She is a charming girl; let me introduce her." And, seizing the figure as it whirled by, she dragged it up to the inquiring lady. The lady was amiable enough to enter into the joke.

It was while I was boarding in Philadelphia that Fanny Kemble came there



Flouza Good Skin

“The young man, not to be ‘stumped,’ took the thing in his arms, and waltzed quite around the room with it.”

to read. The Quaker City was her social stronghold. She had married Pierce Butler, a member of one of the F. F. P.'s, and, though his people did not altogether approve of his marriage to an actress, particularly one as aggressive as Fanny Kemble, they received her as one of the family, though with none too great cordiality. Her readings, however, were great social events. I determined to go, though a ticket cost half a week's earnings. Every one I knew was going, and I felt it a social as well as an intellectual duty to attend the reading. I had to economise for a while, but I am glad that I went. What was five dollars to pay for such a treat, and the memory of it, which is ineffaceable? There were no reserved seats, so people sent their servants to keep places for them. Mrs. Gillespie describes the incident with graphic and humorous pen in her delightful volume of reminiscences. The Susan for whom she kept a seat was my mother's dearest

friend. I knew more people at that public performance than I should know at an afternoon tea to-day.

“The Merry Wives of Windsor” was the play chosen by Mrs. Kemble for the reading. I can see and hear it all now. She was then past middle life; a large woman with a rather severe face, not in the least suggestive of Sully’s charming portrait painted in her early youth. She wore a simple gown of silk and lace, expanded by a crinoline of huge proportions. As I remember the reading, it was wonderful. It was like an “all-star” performance, or what such a performance should be but never is. Every part was read to perfection, from that of the gruff, rotund Falstaff to that of the gentle Anne Page. Since that eventful day, I have heard many other readers, among them Charlotte Cushman; but none compared with Fanny Kemble. I did not hear Dickens; I was too poor. That disappointment spurred me up to hearing Fanny Kemble, for it

determined me to miss nothing that would have given me such pleasure, even though I had to sell my boots.

In a book-store in Philadelphia I picked up a little paper-covered volume called "Pen Photographs of Dickens's Readings," by Kate Field. It was second-hand, and I bought it cheap. Reading it, I realised more than ever what I had missed. The name, Kate Field, was new to me then. It had a young sound, and I liked it. I learned from the bookseller that the writer was young, and I became very much interested in this unknown, and read everything I saw in the magazines or newspapers signed with her name. Some years later I came to know her well, and it was she who started me on my journalistic career in New York. A brilliant, kindly woman was Kate Field. How brilliant the world knows—how kind is known only to her friends.

Just at this time I was very much thrilled by hearing that there was a young

girl boarding in the house opposite the one in which I boarded, who was going to be an actress. A Siddons, maybe, or a Kemble! She was to make her *début* at a local theatre. I doubt if she was much more excited than I was, on the auspicious night. I could scarcely eat my dinner, and hung out of my window at the risk of breaking my neck, to see her start for the theatre. I watched for an hour, and then saw a cab drive up in front of the house. After a while, the door opened, and the light from the hall fell upon the figure of a young woman wrapped in an opera-cloak with a bit of lace tied loosely around her head. A woman with a small bag in her hand followed, and carried her train as she ran lightly down the marble steps. The young woman jumped into the cab, the other spoke a word of direction to the driver, the door slammed, the horse's hoofs beat fire out of the cobblestones; then all was dark. I followed the cab with my eyes as it rattled down the

street and disappeared in the darkness. What a great thing to be an actress! Glittering costumes, the magic of the foot-lights, music, and wild applause, columns of praise in the newspapers, riches, and fame! That is what I thought then; but that was a long time ago, and the young actress whom I had envied on that night was never heard of again. She twinkled for a moment, and then her light went out.

CHAPTER IX

NOTWITHSTANDING the gaieties of life in Philadelphia, I longed for my home, for my mother, my brothers, and my sisters. I made the same argument that Dixey had made: that I might as well turn all of my income into the family exchequer as to pay out half of it to a boarding-house keeper. It never entered into my calculations that I could not earn as much money in Newark as I had earned in Trenton or Philadelphia. I began to get restless. So one day, after I had been in the Mint but a short time, I asked for the usual month's holiday. We were allowed the month with a full month's pay. When the superintendent gave me my advance, I told him plainly that I might not come back, and that perhaps for that reason I was not entitled to my vacation money.

"I think that the United States Government can stand it," said he. "Your father lost his life in the service of his country; you have done your work well since you have been here, and we will take our chances about your coming back," handing me the money at the same time.

When I told my fellow-workers that I might not come back, they expressed much regret, at which I was not altogether surprised, for I had certainly "enlivened things a bit" among them. I burned my bridges behind me, and set out to find something to do in Newark.

I found the family settled in a hideously commonplace house, at the corner of a street in a thoroughly respectable neighbourhood. In the basement were the kitchen and dining-room; and there were two drawing-rooms on the first floor. The drawing-rooms were furnished with Spartan plainness—a Pleyel grand piano, at least fifty years old, but very graceful and still

sweet-toned, being the only relief to its severity.

I did not find a position as soon as I had hoped, but that did not discourage me. I knew that something would be found. In the meantime, I was not idle. Those were the days of the stereoscope, and I heard of a man who gave out photographs to be coloured. I called upon him, and said I would like to undertake the job. I talked a little art-twaddle with him, treated him as though I regarded him as an artist, and secured the work.

"How many photographs will you take?" said he.

"All you have," I replied, and he turned them over to me, together with the necessary paraphernalia for colouring them.

It was great fun. My sisters helped me, and we had a good time. At first we thought that we would paint the people and scenes as in real life, but that was entirely too tame. We threw reality to the winds, and painted landscapes that

Turner might have envied. Such sunsets were never seen on land or sea, and when it came to men and women we garbed them as for a carnival.

The photographer was enchanted. He said that I was a born colourist—that I ought to devote my life to art. I did not tell him that I had too much respect for art, but that was the truth. He paid me fifteen dollars—which I divided with my sisters—and said, almost with tears in his eyes, that he could not give out any more work, as business was so bad. He would have to do the colouring himself, which was such a pity, when I was so talented. I was sorry, too, but immediately looked about for something else to do.

We had a few calls on New Year's Day; not many, for we did not know many people. Among the callers was a new friend, but one who took much interest in us, first, because he was of a kindly nature, and, second, because he considered us a talented family. So we were—some

of us; I was not of the number. We had the drawing-room in better shape now; books and magazines were scattered about. When I think of our "drop light," I cannot help smiling. It was the first we ever had, and we thought it a dream of beauty. It was in imitation bronze, and represented a falconer in doublet and boots, a plumed hat upon his head, and a falcon perched upon his gauntleted finger. The price of this masterpiece was fourteen dollars, but the gasfitter and plumber from whom Dixey bought it let him have it at trade rates, as they were fellow-poets. The gasfitter was also a great admirer of Shakespeare, and had made a pilgrimage to Stratford-upon-Avon, not so common a thing in those days as now. We kept that drop light long after we realised its weak points artistically, but it has gone now, though it will never be forgotten by me.

To return to our caller. He came to wish us a Happy New Year, but more

particularly to tell me that he had found a position for me. The city auditor, who was a friend of his, needed another clerk, and our friend mentioned me to him. He hesitated, as he had never had a girl in his office, and was not sure that he cared to have one. Our kind friend argued that I was a wonderful mathematician and devoted to business; that he would have no trouble with me on the score of flirtations; and that he at least might give me a trial. And this he consented to do. I gasped audibly when I heard our friend say that I was a wonderful mathematician, for I could not add two and two together and make them four. I said nothing, for I determined to take the place if I could get it, and trust to luck for the result. I was like the man who, when asked if he could play the violin, said he didn't know, for he had never tried. I, however, was determined to try.

Work was to begin the next day, and I was at the auditor's office bright and early.

That functionary was very amiable, and introduced me to the only other clerk, who, he said, would show me what I was to do. The young man was very amiable also, and took a good deal of pains to instruct me. My duties were entirely mathematical. Column after column of figures was to be added up. "That's all," said he. "Mere child's play."

Child's play! Show me the child that would find that sort of work play, and I will show you a monstrosity. I went at it, however, and was surprised to see how quickly I could add. I wrote the result on a scrap of paper, and then added down the column to make sure. Unhappily, instead of proving me right, this second attempt only proved me wrong. A third time I went slowly up the column; the result was unlike either of the others. It was now quite clear to my mind that, should I go over those figures fifty times, I would get fifty different results. This was a trying conclusion.

"There's something wrong about these figures," I confided to the head clerk. "I can't make them come out right."

"Let me see," said he, and, taking the figured paper in his hand, he ran up three columns at a time, jotting down the result. "That seems to be right," he continued, and to prove it ran gaily down the column. The result was the same as the first, and, looking over his shoulder, I saw that it was unlike any of my totals. I sat down at my desk and thought. How was I going to earn my salary by adding figures if I could not get the correct result? As I thought, I whistled softly an aria from "Don Giovanni."

"How well you whistle," said my fellow-worker. "I'd give a good deal to do that. I love music more than anything, and I can't turn a tune to save my life."

I expressed my astonishment, and, to show off my accomplishment, whistled an aria from "Martha" and another from the "Traviata."

"It's a great gift," said he regretfully. Then brightening, "I'll tell you what——"

"What?"

"If you'll whistle opera tunes to me, I'll add up your figures."

The bargain was struck at once. I had a large repertoire, and he was delighted. It was something like my Mint experience. I played while he worked. He was more than satisfied, but I was not. Ten dollars a week for whistling a few tunes seemed like overpay. I was convinced that I could not earn the money by adding, and I did not care to earn it by whistling, as that was not what I had been hired for. After a few weeks, during which time I had tried hard to make a mathematician of myself, I went to the auditor and handed in my resignation.

"I am quite satisfied," said he. "You have done your work remarkably well—for a girl, and I shall be very glad to have you continue."

Then I explained to him that I had not

done it at all, and told him just how it had been done. He seemed very much astonished, but agreed with me that it was not quite the way to earn a salary.

The head clerk was very sorry to have me go. He said that the extra work was nothing; that he was more than repaid by the music—that is what he called it—and that he would miss it very much.

So ended my first and last attempt to earn my living by figures. No amount of practice could make an arithmetician of me, and even now, if I can balance my bank-book twice a month, I am satisfied, and so is my bank.

CHAPTER X

My experience as an adder was short-lived. Whistling was easy work, but it was too easy, and I was not sorry that I had resigned the post, for, with the confidence of youth, I felt sure that I should soon find something else to do.

Sure enough, the something else was not long in coming. The newspaper that Dixey was on wanted a proof-reader, and through his influence I was offered the job. I took it, though I had no more knowledge of proof-reading than of Sanscrit. However, that was a mere detail. In the back of Webster's Dictionary there was a full explanation of proof-reading, with examples of the art. I spent an evening in studying the subject, and corrected some "galleys" of printed matter that Dixey brought home with him for me to try my 'prentice hand

upon. The next day I entered upon my duties. The son of the editor was my associate. He had experience, so he corrected the printed slips while I held the "copy"—journalese for manuscript. It was his task to read aloud, mine to follow and catch any mistakes in sense, word, or punctuation. As is the manner of proof-readers, he read in a monotonous voice thus:

"As shows the air when with a rainbow grac
apostrophy d comma new line So smiles that
r-i-b-a-n-d apostrophy bout my Julia s apos-
trophy waist semi-colon new line Or like dash
nay comma apostrophy t that z-o-n-u-l-e-t of
love comma wherein all pleasures of the world
are wove period.

It was impossible for me to keep my mind on the "copy." It would go wandering off to other things—castles in Spain which I was always building. For a strenuous young person, I was a good deal of a dreamer, and I am pleased to find that Herbert Spencer confesses to having indulged in the same habit, and that he con-

sidered a certain amount of it a good thing. I have lived in several of my castles, and hope to live in more before I die. The proprietor of the *Daily* evidently did not share Mr. Spencer's view of the case, and after I had disgraced the paper by allowing a number of bad typographical blunders to escape me, I realised that my resignation would be accepted without regret if I should offer it. One day I let something get into the paper that raised a hornet's nest over my head. I was as innocent of it as a babe. It must have been something terrible, for no one would tell me what it was. The entire edition was sold out the moment the paper appeared on the streets. I looked through the copy on the office file, but could find nothing. I noticed that a two-inch square was cut out of a certain column. "That must be it," I thought, and hastened to the nearest newsdealer's. "Have you this evening's *Daily*?" I inquired. Yes, he had it, but that same two inches was cut out.

"Could you let me have a perfect copy?" I asked.

"I wish that I had a dozen of them," he answered regretfully, "for I could get a dollar apiece for them as easy as rolling off a log."

"Why are they in such demand?" I inquired.

"Some slip of the printer's."

"What was it?"

"Sorry, I can't tell you. It was pretty bad, though. Whoever let that go will catch it."

As I was one of the proof-readers, I suppose that I was as guilty as my associate, though I have often thought that, whatever the error was, perhaps the fault might have been with the compositor. However, I was responsible, and I decided to resign before I was asked to do so.

"I don't think that you are cut out for a proof-reader," said the proprietor, and I thoroughly agreed with him. He did not tell me what the mistake was, and after my

interview with the newsdealer I thought it as well not to ask.

The next opportunity offered me was in the office of the Registrar of Deeds. The work was not interesting; it was merely the copying of deeds from the lawyers' papers into a large leather-bound folio. There were a dozen or more women engaged in the work, and we were paid five cents a hundred words. I saw a great opportunity. Space work suited me, for I wrote a good hand, and rapidly. But oh, how deadly dull was the work! The tiresome repetitions of the law, enlivened by technical descriptions of the property conveyed by John Doe to Richard Roe. I put in longer hours than any one else in the office, ate a luncheon of pilot-biscuit dipped in salt as I wrote, and earned twenty dollars a week! This was riches. I was the most successful wage-earner in the family. I did not like the work. As with proof-reading, I could not keep my mind on it, and at the end of the week, when our work was "com-

pared"—that is, when, as in proof-reading, one held the original and read from it while the other followed the writing in the book—the errors in my work were fearful to behold, and took me hours of time to correct.

I knew perfectly well that I had not found my niche yet, but I could not afford to sit around and wait till it found me. I had to earn my salt and the salt of others, and idleness was out of the question as well as very distasteful. I loved to work, even if not in the line of my sympathies. What I longed for was journalism. It was an inherited longing. My father, though a preacher and a teacher, had it, and Dixey and I inherited it from him. Printer's ink ran in our veins, and the click of the type against the "stick" was music to our ears. I knew that what I longed for would come, and I was content to wait. In the meantime, I made the best of my present business and enjoyed life.

Dixey's newspaper connections gave me

many opportunities for visiting the theatres, for he was dramatic critic as well as reporter and minor editorial writer on the *Daily*. Some excellent "attractions," as they say in the profession, came to Newark, and I took them all in.

The first great theatrical treat I had was a week of Edwin Booth. I saw that fine actor in all his famous parts. "Hamlet" was the first play that I ever saw, and though I have seen many Hamlets since, from the fascinating Fechter to the extraordinary Anna Dickinson, and, later, the phenomenal Sarah, I have never seen one who seemed so absolutely the character that Shakespeare drew as Edwin Booth. I saw him many times after that memorable week, and I never changed my opinion.

Operas came to Newark, too. Not "grand opera," as we call it to-day, but pretty good opera of its kind. Chief among these was the Caroline Richings English Opera Company, with the lady whose name it bore as prima donna, and

Castle as tenor and Campbell the baritone. None of the present generation ever heard of Castle and Campbell, yet they were among the *matinée* idols of their day. If my memory is to be trusted, they were fine singers, too, and to hear them in "The Bohemian Girl" was something to remember. Miss Richings, a conscientious singer, was the "girl," while the gypsy woman was played by Zelda Seguin; Devilshoof, the gypsy man, by Ted Seguin, her husband. What a great actor I thought him, and how I laughed at his clowning!

So you see that, while I worked, I played also, and was as happy as the day was long.

CHAPTER XI

THE niche that I wanted to fill at last came my way, and I sprang into it. Dixey and a young friend of his on the *Daily* decided to start a paper of their own. There was no morning paper in Newark. Here was a long-felt want, and they determined to supply it. Neither of these boys had any money, nor had either of them any great aptitude for business. They were both hard workers, and if they had been backed by business management and a certain amount of capital they might have succeeded. As it was, they only struggled on to failure. They started in with high spirits and made a good paper—too good, I am afraid. We all worked on it. Dixey was managing editor and editorial writer; his partner, young Byrd, was general reporter; while Sandy took

Police Headquarters as his share. An ex-preacher was the business manager and capitalist to a small amount, while I wrote an irresponsible column called "Breakfast Table Talk," which touched upon any topic under the sun, and a column of personals called "*Qui Va Là*," which the composers, with fine scorn for foreign words, pronounced "Quiverler." I worked in the Registrar's Office for money and the *Register* office for love. It was a training-school, and I could not have had a better trainer than Dixey. He "blue-pencilled" my finest flights of fancy, and kept me within bounds.

Because of my love of the stage, I was allowed to write theatrical notices, and, if my memory serves me, I wrote of Miss Ada Rehan's début, which took place in Newark. I regret that I do not remember her share in it, but I do remember her uncle (I believe he was Oliver Doud Byron), with whom she appeared.

How we worked on that paper! Dixey

nearly killed himself. He never thought of coming home to his dinner. We used to carry it to him in a basket. He was always too busy to eat it while it was hot, but laid it aside until late in the evening, and then ate it cold. Some nights he was too tired to come home at all, and would throw himself down on a pile of newspapers in the corner and sleep till morning. Then he would come home, have his bath and breakfast, and hurry back to the office. It was hard work, but perhaps it would not have hurt him if it had not been accompanied by worry. The two ends would not meet. Printers' and paper-makers' bills came in with alarming regularity, but there was little but promises to meet them with. This worried Dixey, who hated debt, and, though he could not pay his creditors then, he did later—every one of them, dollar for dollar.

We all worked hard on the *Register*, and those who did not have the financial end to worry over enjoyed it to the full. It was

while working on the *Register* that I learned that the New York *Forum* had no Newark reporter, so I began sending news paragraphs to the city editor, at that time Mr. Ford, the father of the late Paul L. Ford. To my delight, he printed them, and one day he sent for me to come over and see him. I went at once; I might say I flew. Mr. Ford was surprised to find the person who had been sending him Newark news a young woman, but he did not seem to object, for he at once offered me the position of regular reporter at twelve dollars a week. With an average of twenty from the Registrar, here I was, not yet seventeen, earning thirty-two dollars a week! It never occurred to me that I was burning life's taper at both ends, for that is practically what it was. All day copying deeds, all the evening writing paragraphs, editing "back-matter," that is what we called clippings from magazines and newspapers. The deed-copying was rather irksome, I admit, and I longed for the day

when I should have nothing but newspaper work.

In the meantime, things on the *Register* went from bad to worse. It was losing money as only a newspaper can, so Dixey and his partner decided to sell out. It is one thing to arrive at such a decision in regard to a newspaper property, and another to carry it out. They did not want to sacrifice a thing that had cost them so much time and debt to establish, and to sell for anything like the value represented by their work, and the reputation they had given the paper, was not to be done in a day; so they hung on.

In the meantime, a New York magazine of dignified character but small circulation needed an editor. A friend mentioned Dixey's name to the proprietor, and he was engaged for the position at fifteen dollars a week. This, with what I earned, would have been a fairly good income for the family, but it could not be used to that end. Dixey did not think it right to desert his

partner; so he paid all of his weekly stipend over to a man to take his place on the *Register* until such time as it could be sold.

That time came at last. I don't think that anything was paid for the paper; it was merely taken over by a stock company. A new managing editor was installed, who was good enough to think my services worth retaining at a fair price; so I resigned from the Registrar's Office and began in earnest the work of my life. The staff now consisted of the managing editor, who was also the leader-writer, a reporter, and myself. It was my duty to assist both the editor and the reporter, and between the two, the writing of scintillating paragraphs, and the *Forum* work, I was kept busy, but not too busy to please me. The hours were long, for there was much to do, and the *Register* was a morning paper. Sometimes I would not leave the office until one o'clock or after. I remember one night, as I was starting out particularly late—or early, as you prefer—the managing

editor said that he would see me to my door if I would first go with him to the market, which was only a few blocks up the street. To this I readily agreed. As we walked along the deserted street, he descanted upon the luscious things to be had in the market.

"I like to get to the market early, before it is yet dawn," said he in his most bombastic manner. "Then I have the pick of everything and can secure the choicest bits, before the city has shaken the sleep from its eyes. There, for me to choose from, are the fruits of all parts of the country—the luscious oranges from California, the juicy grape, the toothsome apple; the blushing tomato, the crisp lettuce and jocund bean. And then the fish!" (By this time we were in the market-house, and my mouth was watering.) "Fish fresh from the sea!" he went on; "the striped bass perhaps, and from the river the shad, while the brook gives up the speckled trout. Ah, trout! I can see the

fisherman cast his line, the trout flies up, the rod bends, and lo! in a moment it is in the basket, to be broiled for my breakfast. Ah! Here are the fish. Let us look at them. Beauties, are they not? A fish just out of the sea, the river, or the brook, that is the thing for me." Then turning to the man behind the counter, "What have you, my friend?"

"Almost everything in the fish line."

"Have you bluefish?"

"Yes, sir. Seventy-five cents for the big ones."

"Shad from Connecticut River?"

"Yes, sir. Ninety cents."

"Roe shad?"

"Yes, sir. Fat ones, too. A dollar and a quarter. Why, this here——" The editor interrupted him.

"Delicious, beautiful! I think, however, that I will have a salt mackerel. Have you any?"

"I guess there's one somewhere around here." And, diving down into a keg under

the counter, he produced one dripping with brine.

“A fine fish,” said the managing editor, counting out fifteen cents. Taking the brown paper parcel from the fishmonger, he added, “Well worth this early visit to the market. There’s nothing like a good salt mackerel to begin the day on—a feast for the gods!”

I hardly knew whether to laugh or to cry. It was funny, but pathetic too. I suppose that he hungered for the fresh fish, but his pocket would not permit; so he was obliged to thirst after the mackerel.

CHAPTER XII

THE Redmonds were spending the winter in New York, and Kate used to run over to Newark now and then to spend the night with us. She came over one night when Sandy and Dixey were away, and pretended that she was very nervous at the thought of staying all night without a man to guard us. She called me to her room after she had retired, and there she lay in bed with one of Dixey's hats on and Sandy's cane in her hand.

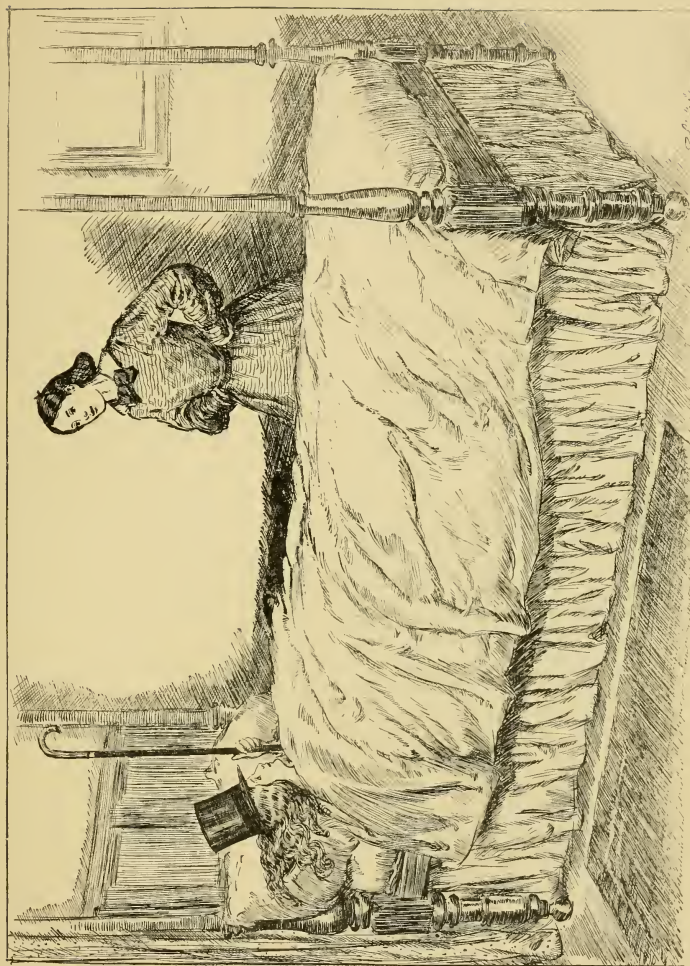
"What in the world are you doing in that rig?" I asked.

"If a burglar comes, he will think that there is a man in the house," answered Kate.

"If he does, he'll think that he's gone to bed the worse for drink, for sober men don't go to bed with their hats on."

Kate was not to be persuaded, however, and slept out the night in her strange attire. There were no burglars, fortunately. I think, if there had been, they would have thought they had broken into a lunatic asylum.

I had never been to an opera in New York, so when Kate asked me to go with her to a *matinée* of "Faust," with Clara Louise Kellogg, then in the heyday of her fame, as *Marguerite*, I jumped at the chance. The Academy of Music was the fashionable opera house of New York at that time. It was not so gorgeous as the Metropolitan Opera House, but its simple decoration set off the costumes of the ladies to the best advantage. There were not so many diamonds to be seen—fewer crowned heads had disposed of their jewels at that time—but necks and arms were just as beautiful then as now, and the "horse-shoe" on a gala night was worth seeing. Opera was rather a cosy function in those days. The people all knew each other.



“ ‘If a burglar comes, he will think that there is a man in the house,’ answered Kate.”

The most enthusiastic patrons of music occupied the proscenium boxes. There was one family whose presence seemed almost necessary to give the singers inspiration. The curtain would remain down while the manager peeped through a hole in the sliding door, that he might give the signal for the overture the moment they appeared. It was the rarest thing for them to miss a performance, and the singers, who are a more or less superstitious class, were quite out of sorts if those two heads of snow-white hair were not in evidence. They were a handsome couple, and their distinguished bearing was a notable feature of an opera night. Who nowadays cares for the occupants of any one box at the opera? Dozens of boxes attract the attention of the sitters in the stalls, but the singers are interested in no one box in particular. It matters little to them if certain leaders of fashion are or are not on hand, so long as the audience is large and enthusiastic.

I was more or less excited about going to the opera in New York, and I was more excited when the music began. From that day to this, "Faust" has been my favourite opera, and from that day to this Clara Louise Kellogg has been my favourite prima donna. I think that I have heard every opera that has ever been sung in this country, and every famous singer that has ever sung here, and I still adhere to my early conviction.

Not only the music of "Faust," but the story, thrilled me. I felt that Miss Kellogg *was* Marguerite, and I was so wrought up over her wrongs that I could have slain Mephistopheles on the spot. I determined to know her, and vowed then and there to leave no stone unturned to that end. I thought it bold of me, because she seemed a thing apart—one who sat upon a pedestal all day, and if she ate at all it was sparingly of nectar and ambrosia. I asked every one I knew whether he or she knew Clara Louise Kellogg, and

not one of them did. I was desperate. Some weeks later, when the opera season was over, she was advertised to appear in concert in Newark. Now was my opportunity! She could not escape me. I told the manager of the Newark Opera House what I wanted, and he said that he would arrange it, and he did. I was to go behind the scenes with him, and he would introduce me to Max Strakosch, who in turn would introduce me to the prima donna. I stood in the "wings" during the entire performance. The prima donna brushed past me as she made her entrances and exits. Once she seemed to notice that there was a gawky girl staring hard at her through burning black eyes, but she said nothing. I applauded her with such violence that the audience, if it heard me, must have thought I was the leader of the claque.

The prima donna was obliged to sing two or three encores to every song. They were the old familiar ballads—"Comin'

Thro' the Rye," "Edinboro' Town," "Janet's Choice," and "Home, Sweet Home." In answer to a double encore, she drew off her long gloves, and seated herself at the piano, and sang the then popular song, "Beware," to her own accompaniment. She sang the words with much archness, and the audience went wild with delight. They much preferred the ballads to the opera arias. When, with a "naughty little twinkle in her eye," she looked down at the front row and sang, "Beware! Take care!" then confidently, "Trust her not, she's fooling thee," the house rose to her. I preferred the "Faust" music and manner, but I was enchanted, as were the others. After the performance, I was taken to the prima donna's dressing-room, a dingy, shabby hole, transfigured in my eyes to a throne room by the presence of this queen of song. She was amiable, and smiled graciously upon my commonplace remarks. She told me afterward that she thought I

seemed a little mad, and I dare say that I did. It was an exciting occasion for me. Clara Louise Kellogg was then one of the three great singers of the world. She was the first really famous person I had ever met, and I was a good deal of a hero-worshipper in those days.

I determined that I would not be a mere behind-the-scenes acquaintance, and I followed up my introduction with a call some time later. She was good enough to see me, and I dare say that I enjoyed the visit, though I remember that I was very much shocked when I heard her say that she would like to have some picked-up codfish for her luncheon. It took us some time to become friends, because, as she afterward told me, I put her on a pedestal, and she did not enjoy the situation. But what could you expect? I could only think of her in the rôle that she sang, and that put her in a class apart. I have since learned that great artists are very much like other people in their daily lives. In

their temperaments, they are very unlike the rest of us, but they eat and dress and sleep the same as their fellows. That they enjoy corned-beef hash and picked-up codfish is the most natural thing in the world. Hotel life, highly seasoned food, unnatural hours, give them a relish for homely food and quiet ways that those whose life is cast along other lines do not understand. I don't think that I ever knew an actor or a singer who did not look forward to a life of retirement on a farm. There is nothing strange about this. It is the natural longing for a life of quiet after a life of intense excitement.

Now that the ice was broken, I went frequently to opera matinées in New York, and it was at the Academy of Music that I heard all the great singers of a past generation.

The *Register* had no Sunday edition, so that Saturday was our holiday. We began work on Sunday afternoon, but we did not find much to do. We got most of our



Clara Louise Keillogg —

“Clara Louise Keillogg . . . was the first really famous person I had ever met.”

news from the few Sunday papers then published in New York. We were pretty sure that our readers had not seen it, for most of them objected to Sunday newspapers, and depended upon Monday morning's paper to tell them what had happened on Saturday as well as on Sunday. Somehow or other, things did not seem to happen, and our Monday issue was not very thrilling.

I worked for a long time on the *Register*, and, though the work was not altogether congenial, I felt that I was on the right track, and enjoyed every minute of it. I did the so-called "Amusements," wrote the "Breakfast Table Talk," the "*Qui Va Là?*" column, the literary notes and book reviews, the minor editorials, did some special reporting, and kept up my *Forum* connection.

Our editor was one of the old-fashioned sort, who loved his pipe and whiskey. He was a "decayed gentleman" and scholar. If he could have let drink alone, he would

have been a valuable man on any paper. You could tell the time by his visits to the "saloon" next to our office. Nothing could have been more regular. When he came to the office he was usually sober, but before the evening was out his head was down upon his desk and he was off in a drunken sleep. Before sleep overtook him, he was apparently wide awake, but, when he took hold of his pen, it slipped about and he could not write, though his mind seemed to be perfectly clear. I remember one night, on the eve of an election, he had a very important leader to write, but he could not hold his pen. He beckoned me over to his desk. "I don't know what has got into my hand," he said. "I must have writer's cramp; my pen flies all over the paper. Would you mind taking down the leader to my dictation?"

I was not a stenographer, but I could write long-hand rapidly. I knew well enough what the trouble was, but said

nothing more than that I would be very glad to help him out.

He dictated, and I wrote. Every sentence balanced; every argument was clearly set forth. It was a brilliant editorial. When it was finished, his head dropped upon his desk and he was soon in a drunken stupor. I sent the "copy" into the composing room, and read the proof when it was set up. The next day the stockholders complimented the editor, and even the New York dailies of the same political leanings copied the editorial into their columns, with flattering comment.

On another occasion his potations had been entirely too much for him. He could not even dictate.

"I've a terrible headache," he said. "Everything is swimming before my eyes. I can't think, much less write. I wonder whether you could not write something for me. You know our views. Don't commit us to the other side, whatever you do." His voice was getting very drowsy. "Perhaps

I'd better lie down; that might help my head."

I said that I thought it would, and he curled up on a pile of "exchanges"—newspapers—in a corner. Soon he was fast asleep. I seized a pen and began to write. This was my opportunity. It was during the Greeley campaign. The old war-horse of the Republican party was the Democratic candidate for the presidency. Our paper was Democratic, right or wrong, so we shouted for Greeley. I wish that I had a copy of that editorial. I proved by ingenious argument that "Uncle Horace" was always a Democrat at heart, and he was only now coming out in his true colours. If he ever read my editorial, he must have writhed under it. I don't know whether he ever read it, but our stockholders did, and the chairman dropped in at the office to speak to the editor about it. I was there, and heard the conversation, the substance of which was not flattery.

"Did you write this morning's leader?" he asked.

"Who else do you suppose wrote it?"

"It didn't sound like you."

"Didn't it? Who did it sound like, Greeley himself?"

"No, hardly; it was too light-waisted for either of you."

"Light-waisted! That's the first time that one of my leaders was ever called light-waisted. (He had already had two cocktails.) If you are not satisfied with my work, Mr. —, if the stockholders are displeased with my leaders, my resignation is at your service. Light-waisted, indeed! I never wrote a better leader than that. It was brilliant, positively brilliant, though I say it that shouldn't."

The chairman knew that it would be hard to find so capital an editor for the paltry salary paid, so he changed his tone.

"My dear sir, we would not accept your resignation if you offered it. Perhaps I am mistaken; the editorial may not have

been light-waisted, but it certainly was not in your fine sonorous style."

"Must one always be sonorous? I like to show my readers that I am versatile, but I accept your apology, and will remain."

The chairman took his departure. The editor winked at me, and went out for another cocktail.

CHAPTER XIII

DIXEY'S position as editor of a New York magazine of high standing, though small pay, brought him into relations with many interesting men and women of letters. Some of them happened to be lecturers, and when they came to Newark we put them up for the night. The late Charles Dudley Warner was the first of our distinguished visitors. I think that, if my mother had been consulted, she would have hesitated to invite a stranger to our humble and inconvenient home. But Dixey was of too hospitable a nature to be deterred by anything of that sort. The first we knew of Mr. Warner's coming was a telegram from Dixey in New York.

A telegram always frightened my mother. She tore the envelope and read this:

"Mr. Warner to dinner this evening and

spend the night; have ordered finger-bowls."

The shock of having to prepare for so distinguished a visitor on such short notice was softened by the fact that we were to have finger-bowls. We had never enjoyed this luxury, but had always longed for it. When Sandy came home to his luncheon, we told him of our guest and the bowls, and he said that we must have fruit; that finger-bowls called for fruit, and it was foolish to have one without the other. He also said that we should have wine.

"Wine calls for wine-glasses," said I. "Where are you going to get them?"

"I will provide both," said Sandy, with a lordly toss of his head, and, sure enough, he did. He came home early to take a hand in the dinner preparations, carrying the two bottles of wine and the wine-glasses with him. He also brought some crackers and cheese, for he determined to do the thing properly. Marty and Miney

set the dinner-table, and were for putting the finger-bowls on at the start, as they were many-coloured and looked very gay on the white cloth. Finger-bowls were not as common in private houses in the early seventies as they are to-day, which accounts for our delight in them; and then my sisters were very young. How we admired that table, with its red Persian bowl of fruit in the centre and the graceful wine-glasses at each place! On the sideboard stood the two claret bottles, the crackers, and the cheese.

Our one servant was a good cook and a most obliging woman, but how was she going to cook the dinner and serve it to so large a party?

"I'll be the butler," said Sandy, "and wait on the table."

"Swell butlers don't have mustaches," I suggested.

"I'll shave," said he.

"But Mr. Warner will know that we are too poor to keep a man-servant."

"Too poor now, perhaps, but we belong to the 'have beens,' and I, your faithful servant, have stuck to you through thick and thin. Leave it to me."

And we did.

We were all assembled in the tiny drawing-room—Mr. Warner, my mother, Dixey, my two sisters and I—when the door opened, and there stood the most respectable old family servant you ever saw. He was dressed in a claw-hammer coat, with a striped waistcoat that looked like part of an old livery; his hair was gray, his mouth dropped at the corners, and his shoulders had the stoop of age.

"Madame is served," he said, bowing solemnly to my mother. We would have laughed aloud and betrayed ourselves had we seen the least glimmer of a smile in Sandy's eyes, but his solemnity struck awe to our souls. At table, he waited upon us to perfection, and whenever he spoke his Irish brogue was delicious. I have no doubt that Mr. Warner envied us

that faithful and accomplished servant. Miney, who was at the giggling age, retreated behind her napkin once or twice and nearly broke us all up, but she recovered herself in time to save the day.

If you could have seen us drink that claret and use those finger-bowls, you would have envied us. Oh, happy days, when finger-bowls and St. Julien added so much to the joy of living!

After dinner, I stood for some time regarding the table with admiring eyes. It looked like the "real thing," with its red, blue, green, and yellow finger-bowls, and glasses with a dash of the red wine in them!

Dixey and Mr. Warner left early for the lecture-hall, and Sandy, after he had removed his badges of office, suggested making potato salad for the evening, for he said that lecturers always liked a bite of something after their work was done, and nothing could be better as a "night-cap" than a potato salad and beer.

Aunt Frances, who was staying with us, but who had not felt equal to the excitement of the dinner, sat at the table while Sandy made the salad.

"I'm so glad that you are going to make a potato salad, Sandy," said she. "You know how fond I am of it. Give me some now, before you put in the oil—or the onion—or the vinegar. I don't care for them, you know."

"Why don't you ask for a cold potato and some salt, then?" said Sandy.

"Oh, I should not like that at all! You see you *slice* the potatoes and put *pepper* with the salt; that makes a great difference."

He helped her bountifully, and she was delighted, saying, as she ate it, "You certainly know how to make a potato salad. I must learn your recipe."

Mr. Warner had just published "Back-Log Studies," and his reputation was being quickly made. I don't remember whether we went to the lecture or not. I

am sure, however, that, if we did, we had a rare treat, and that, if we did not, we missed one. We found Mr. Warner so genial, so easy to get along with, that, having the finger-bowls now in stock, we quite looked forward to entertaining distinguished visitors.

Some time later, that inimitable comedian, John T. Raymond, and his wife, the beautiful Marie Gordon, came to Newark, and with them Miss Kate Field, whose book on Dickens' readings had filled my soul with envy and delight. It seems that Miss Field's parents had been actors, and she had an idea of following their profession. As a preliminary, Mr. Raymond took her into his company, and she played Laura Hawkins to his Colonel Sellers in Mark Twain's "Gilded Age." Miss Field had contributed to the magazine that Dixey edited, so he asked her to stay with us the night that she played in Newark. I got him to extend the invitation to Mr. and Mrs. Raymond for dinner, which we had

quite early on account of the theatre. It was not a formal dinner, but was more like a "high tea." I remember that we had some kind of hot cakes that we called volcanos, because they puffed up in the centre like Italy's famous volcanic mountain. Mr. Raymond enjoyed them immensely, and stayed beyond the time he should, to get some of a newly baked batch.

Mr. Raymond was a great man for "guying," and, as he came on the stage, some minutes late, he said, as if it were part of the play, "I suppose I am a little late, but it was those volcanos at the Gilberts. I couldn't leave them; they were the best things I ever ate."

We nearly rolled off of our seats with laughter, and expected to see the whole house looking at us, but they thought it was in the play, and laughed only as they did at Raymond's other jokes. Though Raymond was always guying on the stage, he never allowed others to. I re-

member once being in Philadelphia when he was playing Sellers, and Mrs. Raymond suggested that we go on in the trial scene and sit with the witnesses. "It will be a great lark," said she; "we'll break John all up."

So on we went, and when the doughty Colonel saw us, instead of our breaking him up he broke us up. Pointing directly at me, he said:

"Why there's Miss Gilbert, come on from Newark to attend the trial. Well, that's mighty good of you, Miss Gilbert," and, coming forward, he shook hands with me so violently that he almost dragged me off the stand. I could hardly keep from laughing, though I felt very much embarrassed. Again the audience did not suspect anything out of the way, and the play went on.

Raymond enjoyed guying off as well as on the stage. I visited the Centennial Exhibition at Philadelphia with him and Mrs. Raymond, and there he never

stopped his jokes. One of the features of the exhibition was a series of wax figures, showing scenes in the life of certain Scandinavian peasants. One of these groups represented a family standing around the crib of a dead child. It was a very lifelike group, and Raymond made believe that he thought it real. He looked at the child, then at the grief-stricken parents. His eyes filled with tears, his lips quivered, and he was the picture of sympathetic grief. The crowd looked at him half pityingly, half amused. His sorrow was too much for one of the lookers-on. She put her hand gently on his shoulder.

"It is not real," said she cheeringly. "These are only wax figures. Dry your eyes, my friend."

"Not real!" said Raymond, drying his eyes. "Not real! Do you mean to tell me that is a wax corpse and that those are wax tears in the eyes of those broken-hearted parents? I wish I could believe

you, madam. Their grief is as genuine as mine. Excuse me," and he wept again. Then others in the crowd reassured him, and, finally, he admitted that he was convinced.

"It is hard to believe," said he, "that those figures are not real. I have never been more moved. It is a shame to get a man so worked up over wax. It isn't right," and wiping his eyes again, he walked mournfully away, Mrs. Raymond and I following in the distance.

No recital gives any idea of these jokes of Raymond's. It was his voice, his gestures, the way he did it, that was so funny.

CHAPTER XIV

WHILE there was usually plenty of news in Newark to make items out of for the *Tribune*, there were times when it was scarce, and on these occasions we "correspondents" had to do a little manufacturing. If we had been paid space rates we would not have done it, but just to help out it did not seem so bad. The *Sun* representative and I cooked up the stories. They were usually about a farmer by the name of Goodman, who had gone to sleep on a load of vegetables and been robbed of his pocket-book. At another time, this farmer by the name of Goodman would be run into by a smart trap driven by a stranger, whose name could not be ascertained. When there was anything big going on, and the New York papers knew of it, they sent out

special reporters. One night something very big happened, and I telegraphed the *Tribune* for a special, but before he came I had sent in my story—everything you write in a newspaper office is a “story” or “stuff.”

A well-known citizen, a man of the best social connections, had been murdered—shot down in cold blood—by a man of a much inferior social position, the cause being jealousy. The case was a celebrated one, and it was the biggest story I had undertaken while I was with the *Tribune*. After the first story was printed, the specials took it up. I think that every New York paper had three or four men on the case. I was very glad to be relieved of it, for the work was not very pleasant. That was my one and only experience with a murder case.

The driest part of my work was when the elections were on. I did not have the national or State elections to report, but some of our local elections were of

sufficient interest in New York to necessitate full reports. These kept me up all night and put me in a nervous state as well, for I was always afraid of missing something. How different the old way from the present. We thought that we "hustled" in those days, and no doubt we did, but we hustled in such small numbers that it seems very quiet and easy-going by comparison.

Ours was the only morning paper in Newark at that time. There were two evening papers, one rich and old-fashioned, the other poor and timid. The editor of the latter was a great friend of our editor. They were men of the same tastes in certain things, and took their afternoon toddies together. One afternoon, our editor stopped for a chat in the office of his friend, and having had perhaps a little more toddy than was good for him, he got to abusing his brother editor for his shortcomings, principally for his want of snap.

"There is no ginger in your editorials. They are too mild. Why don't you say something once in a while, instead of grinding out platitudes. Slaughter your enemies, attack your friends, show some spirit. Why don't you go for me, for instance—in this style: take your pencil, and I'll show you how to do it."

The other took his pencil and wrote at our editor's dictation:

"The editor of our esteemed morning contemporary is drawing money under false pretenses. His employers, poor blind fools, take him to be a sober, industrious man. He is neither sober nor industrious. Most of his time is spent in barrooms, while his subordinates do the work. It is no wonder that his paper is made ridiculous by his vapourings. If it were not for a certain brilliant young lady on his staff, the initials of whose name are Nell Gilbert, who writes his editorials when he is incapable of doing so, his incapacity would long since have been

discovered. There," continued my chief, rising from his chair, "that's the way to do it. Dip your pen in ginger—any one can use ink. Come along now and let's have another; it's been a long time since the last."

The friends linked arms and sauntered into the nearest saloon. They must have remained unusually long discussing the affairs of the nation. It was well after the time for the evening paper to go to press before its editor returned. In the meantime, the foreman was looking around for editorial copy. He was in the habit of searching the editor's desk for it in his absence, and this time he found just what he was looking for right on the top of the blotting-pad, the ink scarcely dry upon it. He picked up the "copy" without reading it, and cut it up into "takes" with his shears. In a few minutes it was in type, and in a few more it was off the press.

As the editors left the saloon, newsboys

were shouting the paper. Like all journalists, the editor was eager to see his own "stuff." He turned quickly to the editorial page. As his eyes caught the first paragraph, the blood left his cheeks.

"Holy smoke!" or something worse, he exclaimed, looking with frightened eyes at my chief.

"What is it?" said the latter.

"Holy smoke!" again exclaimed his friend.

"Let me see," said my chief, taking the paper in his hand. His eye immediately fell upon the editorial he had dictated. The blood fled from his cheeks, but sprang into his eyes.

"You Judas; you blankety-blank scoundrel," he exclaimed, shaking his fist in the other's face.

"On my word as a gentleman, I am as innocent——" . But our editor turned a deaf ear to his friend.

"Gentleman! Innocent!" shrieked my chief. "You don't know the meaning of

the words. You did that on purpose. You are a traitor, a cur——”

“My friend——”

“Don’t call me friend, you coward; defend yourself!” And, with that, my chief raised his cane and charged upon his erstwhile friend. In the meantime, a crowd had gathered, and came in between the two editors. The cause of the trouble was soon discovered, and the Evening —— sold the biggest edition of its history.

While his blood was up, my chief sought his editorial sanctum, and, divesting himself of coat and collar, sat down to write. There was no dictating now. His pen flew over the paper, and each sheet as it was finished was tossed in theatrical frenzy on the floor.

“There, boy,” he shouted to the “devil.” “Take that to the foreman, and tell him to double-lead it for to-morrow morning’s leader. I’ll give him a taste of his own sauce with pepper added to suit *my* taste. Innocent! I’ll swear that he sent in

word to have that copy set while he was drinking to our friendship. He'll wish he'd never been born when he sees tomorrow's *Register*," he hissed at me as he went down the stairs to drown his rage at his favourite bar.

When I returned to the office, late in the evening, there was no one there but the other reporter.

"Where is the chief?" I asked.

"I took him to his hotel, and he is now sleeping it off in his own bed."

"Do you think he'll be around to-night?"

The reporter looked at me with a pitying look, as who should say, "Is that all you know of such things?" With the assurance of his expression, I went into the composing-room and took the editorial proofs off the hook. The two articles written earlier in the day on political subjects were all right. Then I came to the frenzied leader. It was terrible. My chief had a facile pen, and when he was angry his vocabulary was choice. Such sarcasm,

such abuse, I never read. His once friend was called every name in the category of expletives. I went into the composing-room with the proof in my hand.

"Mr. Gordon," said I to the foreman, "that editorial must not be published. The chief would be discharged the moment the stockholders saw it, and the paper disgraced."

"I have no right to leave out what the editor has ordered in," replied the foreman.

"Neither have I, but I'm going to. I warn you, Mr. Gordon, that editorial must not appear."

"It is late, and we have nothing to take its place."

"Give me fifteen minutes and I'll fill the space."

"You write the leader!"

"Anything to save the day."

I glanced hurriedly through the telegraphic news to see what there was worth a leader. The political situation was

already covered. Happy thought! Make one of the chief's minor editorials a leader and fill the space with a social editorial. There was a rumour that the Prince of Wales, now the King of England, was to again visit America. I took that rumour for my theme, and extended a hearty welcome to His Royal Highness. In the name of the citizens of Newark, I invited him to pay us a visit when he came over, and enumerated some of the interesting things that we could show him in the manufacturing line. The editorial swelled with local pride. Indeed, the Prince's coming had been merely a peg on which to write compliments upon our enterprising and prosperous city. I rushed into the composing-room with the "copy" in my hand.

"Here it is, Mr. Gordon. Rush it!"

And he did. In less time than it took me to write it, the editorial was in type. I waited in the office until the first copies of the paper were off the press. Then I

went home, and slept like a top after the excitement.

The next morning, when I arrived at the office, the chief was there. The moment I came into the room he sprang from his chair and grasped me by both hands.

"You have saved me from being disgraced and discharged," said he.

"I hope you will pardon the liberty. I knew that you had been dri—that you were excited, and that you wrote in the heat of temper. If you had come back to the office, you would not have allowed that editorial to appear."

"I'll do as much for you some day."

"I hope you'll never have occa—that's very kind of you."

That afternoon, the evening paper published an explanatory editorial, in which it said that it was all a joke, and that our editor was the most brilliant journalist in the State, and that the writer was proud to call him friend. I am told that the two editors parted that evening at Courtois's

café with tears in their eyes, and every protestation of undying admiration and regard. As for my editorial, it called down loud praises on my chief's head.

CHAPTER XV

I NEVER cared very much for Newark. There were some delightful people there, and I am pretty sure that we knew the most of them, but the place was not attractive. In the winter it was not so bad, but in summer it was dreadful. Such heat and such mosquitos I have never found anywhere else. When my brothers were engaged in newspaper work there, they used to wrap their heads in shawls, and run through Lincoln Park at night as though wild animals were pursuing them.

While we knew the nicest people in Newark, we did not pretend to go into society. My sisters were too young at first, and I had neither the time, the inclination, nor the money. At the same time, I enjoyed knowing people, and did not mind informal dinners and calls; but

at big functions I never put in an appearance. Dixey enjoyed society, and was invited everywhere, and he went, too, though it was years before he owned a dress-coat. People lived more simply in those days, and a black sack-coat and white tie, while not quite the correct thing, could be worn at dinners and dances without calling forth unkind remarks. I should be sorry for the person who wore such a costume to-day. Dixey was very popular, not a bit self-conscious, and he had a good time. Later on, he had a proper dress-suit, made by a Newark tailor, which he wore with so much grace that it looked as if it might have been made by Poole.

Fortunately, dress was not a matter of so much importance when I was a youngster as it is to-day. I always dressed plainly, because it seemed to me more appropriate for business purposes than lace and frills. I had my coats and skirts made by a tailor long before tailor-made clothes were the fashion, not because I affected

man's garb, but simply for its suitableness. To-day, lace and frills would attract more unfavourable comment in a business office than my plain clothes attracted years ago.

It was no uncommon thing when I was young for a girl to have one "party dress" which she kept going through the winter, and no one remarked upon it. There were Flora McFlimseys then, to be sure, but they were not so plentiful as they are to-day.

Not going to balls and routs threw us back upon the theatre and opera for our amusement, and I am not sure but that we had the best of it. Central Park Garden, with Theodore Thomas's orchestra, was the great summer attraction of New York, and I had the entrée to it. Good old Jacob Gosché, Mr. Thomas's business manager, gave me a season's pass, which read,

"Admit Miss Gilbert and friends."

Note the plural, "and friends"—we used to go night after night, half a dozen

strong. There was plenty of room, for the garden was a big place. It was not a roof-garden, but a roofless garden, level with the street. Little tables were scattered around, and the audience sat at them, and sipped its beer to such music as only Chicago enjoys to-day. New York let Theodore Thomas, the best orchestral leader it ever had, go, and Chicago had the appreciation not only to take, but to keep him. We were introduced to Wagner's music at the Central Park Garden, and Theodore Thomas made the Wagner nights the most popular on his list. I had the temerity to write a long letter to Wagner, enclosing programmes of the Wagner nights, and telling him how well his music was given and how thoroughly it was appreciated. My family laughed at me, and said that I was very "cheeky," which I am quite sure now that I was, though I did not mean to be. In the course of time, an answer came from Bayreuth, thanking me for my letter. It was

written by Mme. Cosima, for she knew English and he did not, and it enclosed a photograph of the master, which "he pitied being so ugly," with his autograph on it. I was more or less vindicated by the receipt of this letter, but it did not remove the charge of "cheekiness." I think that was the first and last time that I yielded to the temptation to write a letter of that sort.

I was very much surprised and pleased one day, at about this time, to receive a note from Miss Clara Louise Kellogg inviting me to come over to her house in New York to hear a young girl, whom she had discovered in the West, sing. Miss Kellogg said that she knew I was interested in music, and she thought I would like to be in at the start of so fine a voice. I was on hand to the minute of the hour appointed. The young girl was there too. She was small and, though plain of feature, had a pleasant expression, and was very vivacious. Her speaking voice was very



Horace Love Spinn

“ Her high notes were her best.”

nasal, and there was a slight nasal quality in her singing voice, but that did not affect its sweetness. She sang ballads and arias from popular operas with equal facility. Her high notes were her best, and it seemed to me that she had a great future. Miss Kellogg was enthusiastic about her, and helped her in many ways, as the girl herself told me. She was quite young and full of pluck. She studied hard, and made her début under the most favourable auspices. After a more or less successful season, she lost her voice, and, though it came back later, it was never the same. While she never rose to the first rank of prime donne, Emma Abbott was very popular in English opera, and left a large fortune when she died.

It was on account of Emma Abbott that I severed my connection with the *Register*. The "four hundred" of Newark society tendered her a complimentary concert at the beginning of her career, and I naturally expected to report it, as I was the "amuse-

ment editor" of the paper, and had done much preliminary work in behalf of the concert. The affair was to be a great social as well as musical event, and I wanted to be there, as was my right. It seems, however, that tickets were scarce, and, owing to the social nature of the function, the son of one of our stockholders wanted to report it.

I had invited my mother to go with me, and she, as well as I, was looking forward with more than usual interest to the occasion. I wondered why the tickets had not come to the office, and just before I went home to dinner I asked the chief whether he knew anything about them.

"Yes," said he, "I do. I know everything about them, and it's a blankety-blank shame."

"Haven't they been sent?"

"Yes, days ago, and Mr. —— (mentioning the stockholder's name) gobbled them up for his son."

"Does he know anything about music?"

"Not a blankety thing. He couldn't tell 'Ninety and Nine' from 'Old Hundred.' It's just because it's going to be a swell occasion, and he wants to be there."

"What am I expected to do?" I spoke calmly, but I was in a rage.

"You are to report a church sociable in East Newark."

"Oh, I am, am I! Well, I guess I'm not. Mr. ——'s son can report the sociable. I'm going to the Emma Abbott concert."

The chief looked at me in surprise, as I sat down at my desk and wrote as fast as my pen could fly.

"There," said I, handing him what I had written. "That is my resignation. You can present it to the stockholders to-night. I do not intend to submit to any such injustice. It is my right to report that concert, and I'm not going to be put upon by any stockholder that ever lived. I shall attend the performance with my

mother, as I proposed doing, in spite of all the stockholders and all their sons."

"Won't you reconsider your resignation?"

"I'll reconsider nothing. I've worked like a dog on this paper, and they want to send me over to East Newark so that their son can go to the Abbott concert on my tickets. Let them try to get some one else to do the work I've done for the same pay. I guess that'll keep them busy for a while. I'm sorry to leave the office. You've been a kind chief, and given me a chance to do all kinds of writing, but my mind's made up." I was angry and perhaps unwise, but nothing could have stopped me now. On my way out, I told the reporter.

"It's an outrage," said he, "an outrageous outrage—I'll resign, too. I've only wanted a chance." So he walked into the chief's office and resigned then and there. He gave as his reason that he could not stay on a paper that had

been so mean to a woman. I was sorry for the chief. The fault was not his. It was mean to leave him in the lurch, but there really was no more to do that night. We, the staff, had scarcely left the office before he hurried to the composing-room, and took the foreman to the nearest bar to talk it over.

On my way home, I stopped at the house of one of the ladies most active on the concert committee and told her what had happened. She was indignant, and gave me two of the best seats in the house. My mother and I went, and enjoyed the concert to the full. Not the least of my pleasure was in looking back from my seat, near the front, at the stockholder's son, whose press seats were down by the door.

CHAPTER XVI

AFTER the excitements of the concert were over, and I sat down to weigh matters in the cold light of day, I wondered whether I had not been rash. I had thrown down a salary, a small one to be sure, but it was something to count upon, and I had nothing to take its place. However, I was an optimist then, as I am an optimist now. Perhaps, if I had occasionally been a pessimist, it would have been better for me, but it is hard to change one's nature.

As luck would have it, I was recommended just at this time for the position of New York correspondent for a Boston weekly at \$5 per letter. Not much, but it did not take me more than an hour to write it, and the topics were to my liking. That was a step in the right direction, but another backward step came along just

at this time. There was an important election on, and I sent my report to the *Forum*, as usual. To my horror, in taking up the paper in the morning, not a word about it was there. I rushed over to New York to see what had happened. To my great relief, I found that I had not been at fault. The city editor had received the envelope containing my report, but, instead of turning it over at once to the copy-reader, he laid it on his desk, where other things were piled upon it, and it was forgotten.

I went back to Newark breathing freely. The next day, to my chagrin and disgust, I received a letter from the managing editor, saying in substance that my services were no longer required. He admitted that the failure of the election returns to appear was not my fault, but he thought it much better for the *Forum* to be represented by a man. I had served it well, and as only my initials were used, he did not suspect my sex,

the work being so satisfactorily done; but now that he knew that their Newark reporter was a woman, he would always be anxious about the news.

I was indignant, and considered myself badly used, as I certainly was. If I had done my duty by the paper for two years, or more, there was no reason to suppose that I would not continue to do it. However, there was no appeal, and I began to feel that the earth was slipping from under my feet. I kept up a bold front at home, and was cheered by my mother's confidence in me.

I thought over the situation carefully, and decided that I had better make New York my field, and, if possible, bend all my energies in one direction. To this end, I called upon Miss Kate Field, then the best-known and most successful woman journalist in America. When she stayed at our house in Newark, she had been good enough to express an interest in my career. I found her then and

always the soul of kindness. She listened to my tale of woe with sympathetic ears.

"I cannot help you, so far as the *Forum* is concerned, for certain reasons, but I will give you a letter to Mr. ——," said she, naming the proprietor of the most famous newspaper in America. This she did at once, and I enclosed it in a letter asking for an interview, as the proprietor was, by fortunate chance, then in New York. By return mail, I had a short note from this distinguished personage, naming a day and an hour when he could see me. I was there on time, you may be sure. The interview was short.

"Well," said he, regarding me with piercing eyes. "What do you want to do?"

"I should like book-reviewing, or anything that comes to hand."

"You can do the books, if you like," said he, "but be original; don't give us the same old cut-and-dried stuff. Your salary will be \$30 a week—good morning!"

My impulse was to drop on my knees and kiss his hand—a strong, shapely one, by the way—but I restrained myself, and merely said “Thank you.”

Back I flew to Miss Field and reported the interview.

“Good!” said she.

“But how am I to do *original* book reviews?” I asked rather hopelessly.

She thought for a while and then said: “Do them in dialogue form. Have the family sit around and discuss them, expressing various views.”

The idea seemed a capital one, and I acted upon it. I had a family take up the books of the day and discuss them, giving various opinions; the sons and daughters maintaining a point that was immediately bowled over by the father. My “Chats About Books” became a popular feature of the paper. Publishers offered to put them into book form, and they attained the importance of being burlesqued by the inimitable Nym Crinkle.

He called his burlesque "The Drivel Family," and I am sure that it was well named.

Besides book-reviewing, I was finally promoted to the position of music and dramatic editor, which I held for several years. I did not consider myself a critic, so I merely gave my opinions for what they were worth, and then reported the effect of the opera or the play upon the audience.

At about this time, the Lydia Thompson blondes revisited this country. There was a young woman in a subordinate part who attracted my attention by her beauty and talent. I mentioned her once or twice, and I heard afterward that some one said, "Of course, she got good notices in the —, for the — man was mashed on her." That shows you what gossip is worth. I never saw the girl off the stage, and never cared to, for my interest in her began and ended at the footlights.

It was a rule of the — that its dramatic

critics must not know stage people, but it was a very difficult rule to live up to. The stage people cultivated the dramatic critic with an assiduity that was hardly to be resisted. I believe in the rule, however, for I have always found it difficult to write critically of my friends. Not for want of seeing their faults, but the difficulty was to put friendship so far aside that I could speak of them in public.

Though connected with the —, I continued to live in Newark. I usually took a midnight train home, but, as I did not have to report at the office till noon, this was not so great a hardship. Don't suppose for a moment that I went to bed as soon as I reached my room. Alas, no! I was bitten by the mania for play-writing. From one to three o'clock I worked on a comedy, then I went to bed, not to sleep till nine or ten. Oh, no! I had a brother who found it hard to arouse himself in time to get to work. His business was in New York, and his train left Newark at

half-past seven. I took it upon myself to call him at six. At first, I used to go to his door and knock; then I would go back to my bed. I found that this roused me more than it did him. I would go back to bed, and not be able to go to sleep again, while he turned over and slept till long after train time. Finally, it occurred to me to rig up a bell over his bed, with a cord over mine. At six, sharp, I would wake, and pull that bell-cord till he knocked on my door to prove that he was up. Then I turned over and went to sleep, while he got up and caught the train. Poor fellow, he used to have terrible nightmares. I remember one night we all gathered at his bedside and found him sitting up with eyes wide open and an expression of horror on his face. It was impossible to wake him.

"What's the matter, Robin?" we repeated.

"I can't eat them," he cried; "I can't eat them!"

“Eat what?”

“Those clothes-pins—they have fur on them!”

Sandy, who had a very kind and reassuring manner, said, “Never mind, Robin; I’ve taken the fur off—you can eat them now.”

The expression of horror left Robin’s face, and he turned over, and slept peacefully till he heard the bell ring over his head.

Notwithstanding these interruptions, I managed to finish my play. A friend of ours in Newark happened to know the manager of a Philadelphia theatre where a good stock company was playing, and I asked him if he would send it on. This he very kindly did, and, much to his surprise, though not to mine, for I had the amateur’s confidence in my work, it was accepted.

CHAPTER XVII

It is said that Victorien Sardou was detained over night once in a French provincial city, and seeing a theatre open, bought a seat and went in. There was something familiar about the play, but it was not until the third act that he recognised it as his own. This was not unlike the experience I had while attending the rehearsals of my play in Philadelphia, for which purpose the —— gave me a week off. I could hardly recognise my own words, and there was no suggestion of their meaning conveyed. I was not asked to make any remarks, for, being a green playwright, I was not supposed to know anything. I did not know much—that I admit—but I did know what I meant, which was more than can be said of the company that spoke my words.

However, I was more than lucky to have my first play accepted and produced at a first-class theatre.

I hope that the Philadelphia editors of that day forgave me for my greenness. I can scarcely believe it now, but I actually had the bad taste to call on each one in turn before my play was produced, which, if they had not been a most amiable lot of men, and set down to youth what looked like unbridled assurance, would have meant destruction to my play and to me.

On the evening of the first performance I occupied a box with my family, and sat modestly on the edge of a chair at the back. I sat on the edge of the chair so that I could come quickly to the front in case there was, as there was sure to be, a call for "author." I knew that I could not make a speech, but I could make a bow, and smile to any extent. Indeed, I had practiced bowing over a stair-railing so that I should not be awkward

or pitch out, if called upon to bow over the railing of my box.

There was not a very large audience, but that, I thought, was because I was still an unknown quantity in the play-writing world. The next night there was sure to be a packed house. How I watched that audience. When it laughed I loved it; when it wept, I almost wept with it.

During the performance, I received several telegrams of congratulation, and one from a woman in Brooklyn, asking me what I would charge to make her a new dramatisation of *East Lynne*! It was well that those congratulatory telegrams came before the performance was over. They never would have been sent had the truth been known. At the end of the play I listened eagerly for calls for "author." Sandy said he was sure that he heard some one down by the door shout "author," and he wanted me to go to the front of the box and bow. If I had, I should have bowed

to the backs of the audience. I don't think I ever saw an audience in such a hurry to leave a theatre. If some one had cried "fire," it could not have got out quicker, or have been more relieved upon reaching the street.

The manager came to the box to speak with me after the performance. He did not say much, only that he thought the play might be improved by changing the ending of the acts, cutting out some dialogue here, adding "snappier" lines there, getting in more action, and strengthening the love interest.

"Perhaps it might be better to wait until we see the morning papers," I said, not without intention, "and get their suggestions for changes as well, so that they can all be made at the same time." To this he readily agreed.

In the lobby of the theatre I met an old friend of the family. He had been a good deal of a theatre-goer in his youth, but seldom went in his old age. His opinion

would undoubtedly be of value, and I was anxious to get it.

"I wouldn't have sat out the play if it had not been yours," said he. "There really is nothing new in it. I've seen twenty like it. Why didn't you get some one to help you—some one who knows something about the stage. Of course, for a first play, by a person with no knowledge of the business, it was not so bad. Indeed, I can imagine a worse play, but I wouldn't care to see one. It may succeed, however; the poorer a play, you know, the better its chances of success. The public nowadays knows nothing about the real drama, and cares less. Good night. You have my best wishes."

His best wishes! Well, that was something!

I did not go to bed in a very happy state of mind, and lay awake most of the night in expectation of the notices in the morning papers. They were all bad—not slashingly bad, but such faint praise that the damning

was all the greater. The only paper that praised the play was one of which the managing editor was an old friend. He was obliged to go out of town, and did not see it—that was his good fortune—but he left word with his dramatic critic to praise the play no matter how bad it was. I heard this story from his wife, who told it to illustrate how kind-hearted her husband was, so the little consolation I might have had from one notice was torn from me.

The —, my own paper in New York, had a special despatch about the play, which it described as a *succès d'estime*! This was letting me down easy.

My arrangement with the manager was that I should share the profits after expenses. The play was kept on for a week, and there were expenses, but there were no profits.

I felt rather discouraged about plays after this, and wrote to the Brooklyn woman that I had no time to make a new dramatisation of *East Lynne*.

I should have given plays the go-by for a while, if a friend on the stage had not encouraged me to keep going. She was always intending to "star," and to that end needed a play. I must have written half a dozen for her to choose from. She took them all, but produced none, which shows that she was a wise woman. She did, however, succeed in disposing of one to another actress, who "starred" in it with some success. Just what success I was never quite able to determine, as she waived the formality of payments.

Finally, my friend prevailed upon her husband to get me to make a play for him out of a then popular novel. He was a most successful "star," so I considered my fortune made when he produced the play with great *éclat* in a western city. How the papers "roasted" the actor and the play! He took it off, put one of his old successes on, and sent the manuscript back to me to rewrite. He liked the part, and he was determined to play it. Nothing

could have been less suited to his undoubted talents; that is why he liked it. I took the manuscript and worked over it in the still and midnight hours. It was no use. I only made things worse. Then I called in an expert, and he made them worse than I had, and charged me a thousand dollars for doing so. The star agreed with me that the expert's work was worse than mine, so he shelved the play. I have the play-bill and his photograph in the part; as they cost me a thousand dollars, they are, up to this date, the most expensive wall-decoration that I own. They hang before me as I write. I have some other play-bills neatly framed, but they cost the "stars" who produced the plays more than they did me.

The trouble was that I had more opportunity than talent in those days. Now I have more talent than opportunity, but that is another story. Perhaps, if I had stuck to play-writing, I might have made a success of it, but I had other things

to do that had to be done, and I could not afford the luxury of experimenting.

The play-writing microbe is a terrible one, and the sooner it is got rid of the better. I could write a book about my play-writing experiences, but I won't.

CHAPTER XVIII

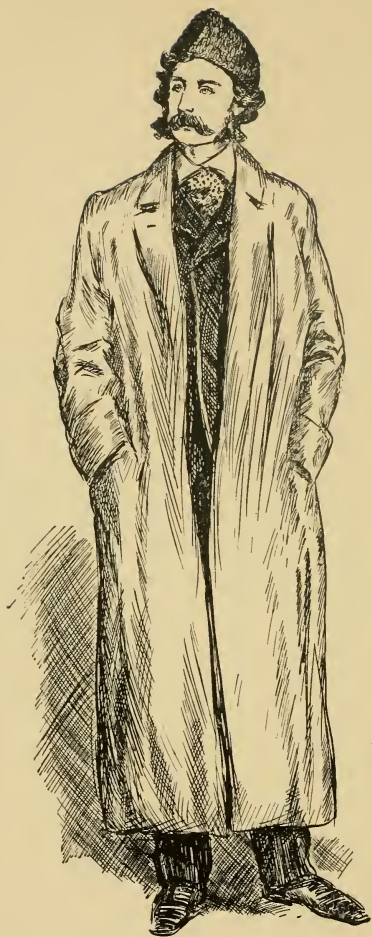
WE were still living in Newark, and still entertaining the interesting people who visited that city from time to time.

Dixey and I were walking down Cortlandt Street to the ferry one day, when he said, "The person of all others whom you would most like to see is coming to New York. I'll give you one guess."

"Bret Harte," said I, without hesitating.

"Right you are," said he; "and he is coming out to Newark, and will stay over night with us."

Bret Harte was the brightest star in the literary firmament at that time. His first book, "The Luck of Roaring Camp, and Other Stories," had just been published, and he was the literary excitement of the hour. His breezy Western style, his humour, his pathos, his virility, held us



Florence Scott Shinn

“In his long ulster and peaked astrachan cap.”

spellbound. We were all eager to know what he was like, and we soon found out. He came East to lecture, and when he lectured in Newark he stayed with us. He was all the most exacting hero-worshipper could have asked. I see him now in his long ulster, with a peaked astrachan fur cap set jauntily on the side of his head, as was the fashion of the day. He entertained us with anecdote at dinner, and, after the lecture, we sat up late into the night listening to his stories of the West. He was simple in his manner and perfectly unspoiled.

Kate Redmond, who was visiting us at the time, thought she would "get a rise out of him," as it is called, by confusing him with John Hay.

"I have read all your poems, Mr. Harte," said she, "and I don't think that you have ever written anything better than 'Jim Bludso.'"

"You are quite right," answered Mr. Harte; "I never have."

Then we fell to talking of the young men who were just beginning to be heard from in the literary world. Among them John Hay.

"Do you know him?" asked Kate Redmond.

"Very well, indeed," answered Mr. Harte.

"Do describe him."

Mr. Harte obliged her with the description.

"I had an idea that he was a small man," said Kate

"You must have judged him by his 'Little Breeches,'" replied Mr. Harte, quick as a flash.

After Mr. Harte left, he sent my mother a handsome coffee-cup of rare Chinese ware, which he suggested she should call "the lecturer's cup." We prized it so highly that we never used it, even for lecturers. I have it now in a cabinet, where I keep my best bits of china. To me he sent a copy of "A Week in a

French Country House," which he said was one of his favourites among novels, and wrote on the paper cover, "For Gilbert's Circulating Library." I kept that book for years, till it was worn out with reading. I am afraid that it has been lost in many movings since that day.

I still have, however, the copy of the first edition of "The Luck of Roaring Camp " that he gave me. It lies faded and worn before me. On a fly-leaf is a photograph of the author that I pasted there at the time. On the leaf opposite, the book is inscribed to me. In Mr. Harte's neat chirography are these lines:

" . . . Good-looking and debonaire,
Smarter than Jersey lightning—There!
That's her photograph, done with care."

It was a quotation from one of his own poems. The line in the original is "Rich, good-looking and debonaire." For obvious reasons he left out the "rich"; for equally obvious reasons he might

have left out the "good-looking," but Bret Harte was always a gallant gentleman.

Things were improving with us, but we were far from rich. That we were able to pay our bills and have something for the cat was a great comfort to us. That saying, "something for the cat," we got from a poor clergyman, whose children's appetites were greater than his ability to satisfy them. Many a time I have seen the good rector look over his table after a meal, and, shaking his head, sadly murmur, "Nothing for the cat!" The expression got to be a by-word in our family, as did that of "nibble cheese," derived from the same source. Smilingly, he would put a small bit of cheese on the table, and say to his children, "This is nibble cheese, my dears." They knew by that that they were not expected to eat much, and they didn't, because there was not much to eat.

A new magazine, with a large capital and shrewd business management behind it,

had been raised from the ashes of the old one that Dixey was editing. A well-known and popular author had been made editor, and Dixey, on an enlarged salary, was his assistant. Sandy, who had not been doing much of anything since the war, was busy painting portraits on porcelain. They were not exactly miniatures, for their foundation was photography. They were quite fashionable in Newark, and Sandy did a good business among the rich and great. He had some queer orders in the course of his business; one was from a man whose wife had died, and who, having no likeness of her, had had her photograph taken after she was in her coffin. He brought it to Sandy and asked him to colour it.

"I don't know just what to do with the coffin," said Sandy. "I can't very well paint it out," said he, "for it is so dark that it would show through the paint."

The husband looked disappointed for a moment; then his face brightened, and he

said, coaxingly, "Why can't you make it like she was in an opera-box?"

Sandy tried to excuse himself, but the man was so much in earnest, and seemed so disappointed at the thought of not getting it, that he consented. I saw the picture when it was finished. It was cleverly managed, but to me most gruesome. The bereaved husband, however, was delighted.

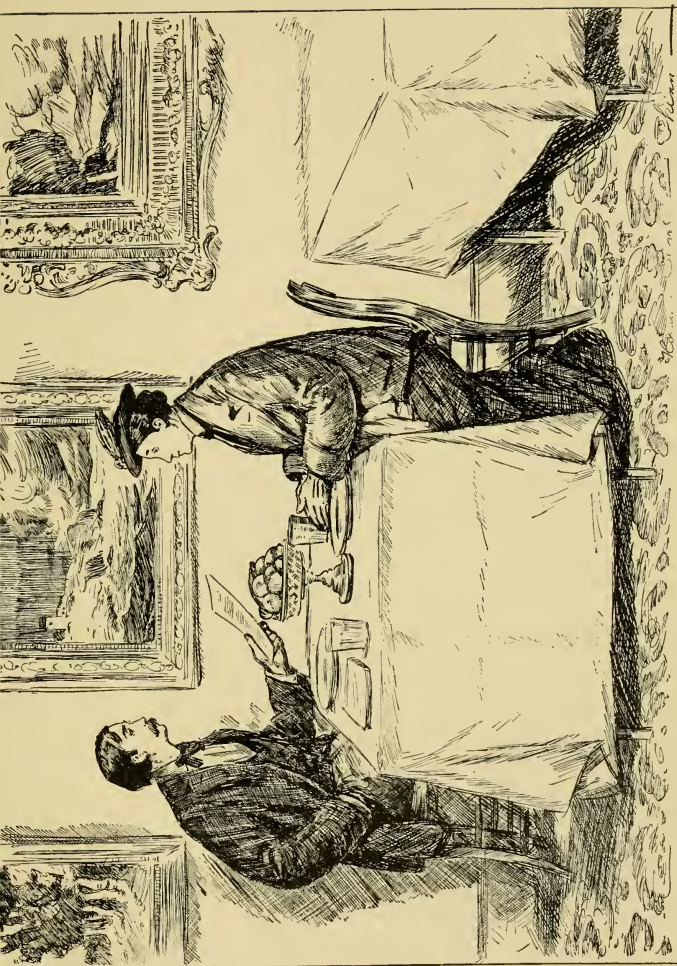
Another queer order came to Sandy from a poor coloured woman. She said she could not pay more than a quarter, but she would like to have her husband's photograph painted. Couldn't he make the cheeks red, and make him "ginger-bread instead of black nigger." Sandy took the order, but not the quarter. The widow was more than pleased, and, adding a quarter to the one Sandy did not take, she bought a frame made of shells for her treasure.

Whenever we could, Dixey and I took our luncheon in New York together. At first we patronised a fifteen-cent table

d'hôte in Eighth Street; that palling on our appetites in the course of time, we went to Seighortner's, in those days one of the best restaurants in New York. When we first went to it, it was at the south end of Lafayette Place, but later it moved up to the old Astor homestead, on the same street. The *bon-vivants* of New York knew Seighortner's well. It was there that Sir Henry Irving was introduced to canvasback and terrapin at a dinner given to him by the late Colonel Bucke, editor of *The Spirit of the Times*. Dixey and I did not go in for either of these two dishes. Our standing order was "pea soup and a French kiss." Bread and butter were served with the soup, which was not only delicious but "filling at the price." One bowl made enough for two, and one "kiss" also was enough for two. The service at Seighortner's was perfect, and I must say for the proprietor that he treated us with as much deference as he did years later when our

orders were more flattering to his cuisine. The place has gone now, but every old New Yorker who cared for good eating will remember it with pleasure. There is no face that comes before me more vividly than that of the old Swiss *restaurateur*, with its keen grey eyes and stereotyped smile. He would always take your order himself when it was possible. As he told off the delicacies on his bill of fare, he would kiss his finger-tips to the rarest dishes, and, when he gave your order, you could hear him give your name down the speaking-tube to the *chef*. This little personal touch made you feel that you were going to have particular attention, and it flattered you—at least, it flattered me.

One day, when I was sipping my pea-soup at Seighortner's, Dixey told me that he had invited one of his magazine's most distinguished contributors, the Rev. Dr. George MacDonald, then lecturing in this country, to spend Christmas with us. I nearly choked. There were Dr. Mac-



"Our standing order was 'pea soup and a French kiss.'"

Donald, his wife and oldest son. It would be lovely to have them, but where in the world were we going to put them. Every bedroom in the house was full of the family. "We can double up," said Dixey cheerfully.

"Double up! If we triple up, we can't do it."

"Nonsense. Leave it to me."

"It is impossible."

"It can't be impossible, for I've asked them, and they have accepted."

"Well, then there's nothing to do but to make them as comfortable as we can, and have a good time."

I don't remember just how we did it, but we got them in without much inconvenience, and we had a memorable time. George MacDonald was one of the most attractive, lovable men I ever met in my life, and we were sorry when they left us.

On the night of their arrival, we retired after they had, and, as we passed their doors, to our horror we saw their boots ranged outside. We kept no man-servant,

so here was a dilemma. Which of its horns were we to seize?

CHAPTER XIX

THERE were other things besides editing that were interesting Dixey at this time. He was thinking about getting married, and the more he thought the more he decided to. He had met many attractive girls in the course of his social career, but, strange to say, he had never thought of marrying until this particular one appeared upon the scene.

After Dixey's marriage, I decided to move to New York. My mother agreed with me that it would be the best thing to do for many reasons, and the girls were enchanted, for New York was an earthly paradise to them. I wanted to cut down the size of the family, and so decided that to take a small flat would be the best way to accomplish the desired end.

One did not have the choice of flats

then that one has to-day—and I was beginning to feel rather discouraged, when I came upon just the thing I wanted, in just the situation I wanted, and for just the price I could afford to pay. It was on Eighteenth Street, east of Irving Place, and at the time I picked it out it was still unfinished, but I could wait for a thing so well worth waiting for. The house was owned by one of the largest estates in New York, and the agent, a most obliging man, allowed me to choose, not only the wall-paper, but gas-fixtures and the tiles for the fireplace. I chose the simplest gas-fixtures I could find, and reproductions of old Dutch blue-and-white scriptural tiles, and when the place was ready for occupancy it was most attractive.

It was really too small for either our family or our furniture, but that did not disturb me for a moment. There was no room for Rufus, who was a full-grown man now, nor was there any room for a servant. But the former took a room

opposite and the latter had not materialised yet, so there was time to think over the matter of her disposal.

We managed to get my mother's four-post bedstead in her room, and that about filled it. My room was only seven by ten feet, but I got a bed, a bureau, and a big old-fashioned desk in it. The rooms were all light, and gave out to the sun and air, so, even if they were small, they were not stuffy. We were up three flights, and there was no elevator, but we did not mind that, as the apartment was so light and airy; we were young, and it was New York.

As I have said, the rooms were small, and our furniture was large. I could sit at my place at the dining-room table and shut either of the doors with a stick of French bread, and I could tilt back in my chair and reach anything off the side-board. It was certainly a convenient, if not elegant, arrangement.

As far as my work was concerned, the

relief of being in New York was great. I was now doing the theatres almost exclusively, and the managing editor was good enough to let me write my copy at home and send it down by messenger. There were times, however, when I had to go to the office after the theatre, and I was often there very late—till long after midnight. Sometimes I wrote my "story" at home and took it down myself, being afraid to trust a messenger when there was a special hurry on account of the lateness of the hour. I went up and down by the Third Avenue horse-cars; the elevated road was not built then, and it was long before electricity.

The patrons of this line after midnight were not a very reassuring lot of people, so I carried a pistol in my coat pocket in case of necessity. It is just as well that the necessity for using it did not arise, for it was little more than a toy, being only for one cartridge, and that a tiny one. However,

it made me feel quite safe, and that was the main thing.

I used to go all over New York late at night, and never once was I spoken to or annoyed in any way. I would not do the same thing now, for either the city has grown wickeder or I have grown wiser.

It was while I was the "dramatic critic" of the — that Mme. Modjeska made her first appearance in New York. Fanny Davenport's first appearance as Rosalind, in "As You Like It," was booked for the same night, and as she was an old favourite and Modjeska an unknown quantity I was sent to "do" the former. Miss Davenport played at Booth's Theatre, at the corner of Sixth Avenue and 23d Street, and Mme. Modjeska at Daly's, now Proctor's. Between the acts of "As You Like It," I dashed up to Daly's to see the new Polish actress. I sat in the box with Clara Morris and the late Dion Boucicault, both of whom were most enthusiastic over the acting of Modjeska. I was carried off my

feet by it, and lamented the fate that called me away. Seeing Modjeska was an appetite that grew with what it fed upon, and during that season I saw her twenty times in "La Dame aux Camélias," a performance in which, to my mind, she had no peer, and I have seen all of the famous ones from Matilda Heron to Eleanora Duse.

My work on the —— was not all that I did. I wrote out-of-town letters, six a week, and on every possible subject. They were not syndicate letters, as they would be nowadays, and they were not typewritten. I wrote each one with my own pen, and was paid ten dollars apiece for them. I began with one paper at five dollars a week, but, as my letters became an institution of the paper, I was raised later to ten. The proprietor of the paper was in New York, and when he called upon me to discuss future subjects I told him that I wanted ten dollars a week.

"That is a jump of a hundred per cent.,"

said he, staggered at my audacity, for the five-dollar rate had been in force for ten years. "Can't you make it seven-fifty?"

I was firm—ten, or a rival journal, whose letter offering that much I showed him—so ten it was.

Unfortunately, perhaps, I wrote my six letters over six different pen-names. I don't know why I started in with a pen-name, unless it was because of George Sand and George Eliot. I did not call myself George anything, I am happy to say. To have used my own name would have been better business. I know that now, but I liked the idea of anonymity then.

A few years ago, when the Boston Ancient and Honourable Artillery Company was in London, I happened to mention to one of the members, with whom I fell into conversation in the courtyard of the Hotel Cecil, that I had written for many years for the Boston — over the name

of, let us say, "Brunswick." Meeting with royalty was nothing to this man compared with meeting the correspondent whose letters he had read for so many years.

"I want to know?" said he, expressing genuine Yankee surprise, and he shook my hand with a fervour that drove my rings into the bone. In half an hour, every Ancient and Honourable in the courtyard had been told the wondrous tale, and for the time being London and its glories were forgotten. I cite this incident merely to show that my letters were not unpopular, and that I had right on my side when I struck for higher pay.

I have no file of those letters, and I'm glad of it, for I doubt whether seeing them in the cold light of mature years would thrill me as their recollection thrilled the Ancient and Honourable Company.

CHAPTER XX

As I said early in the previous chapter, our flat was a small one, and we wanted a small servant to fit it. A large woman would be under our feet all the time, and she would have been in her own way in the tiny kitchen. We tried assorted sizes, but, until we found Hannah, none suited.

Every one who knew us knew Hannah. She was as much a part of the family as those who had been born into it, for she lived with us, off and on, for eighteen years. She was one of the unexpected things that so often happen. Nothing could have been further from our minds than finding Hannah, when we found her. We picked her up in the street; at least, my sister Marty did. We were walking through 18th Street, and near Irving Place Marty called my attention to a little darky in

front of her. At first we thought the figure that of a child; then we noticed the length of her skirts, though they did not touch the ground, and we saw that she was a woman.

When the little woman reached the crossing, she lifted her skirts with both hands, notwithstanding their shortness, and picked her way daintily over the cobblestones (now asphalt).

"There's a woman after my own heart," said Marty. "If she were not neat, she would not be so careful to keep her skirts clear of the mud. I wonder whether she wants a place?"

"The best way to find out is to ask," I replied truthfully. My sister quickened her pace, and caught up with the little creature, who dropped the prettiest courtesy you ever saw.

"Do you know of any coloured woman of about your size who wants to do light housework in a flat?" Marty asked.

"I do, missy," replied the woman,



Florence Sevel Shinn.

Hannah

dropping another courtesy, which completely won our hearts. It was arranged then and there, on the corner of 18th Street and Irving Place, that Hannah was to come to us on the morrow. She had never "lived out" in the North, but she referred to the "intelligent lady" at whose office she had registered, and she said that she could bring letters from people she had lived with for many years in the South.

The next day she came and took possession of the tiny kitchen. Cook and kitchen were well matched in size. Hannah had hardly set about her work before we were congratulating ourselves upon a "find." The first thing she did was to wind a yellow-and-red bandanna around her head and tie over her calico dress a big white apron that completely enveloped it. We looked at each other, and smiled the smile of contentment.

Hannah was not more than five feet tall (almost what she called a "gwarf"), and small-boned. Her skin was of a

dark, rich brown that set off her even, white teeth to the best advantage, and she had a most engaging expression. Her last name was Street, she told us; or rather that was the name of her master, when she was a slave in the South; the war had not been over very long then. The fact that she had been a slave lent a romantic interest to Hannah. After she had lived with us for some time, she confided to us that her parents had been caught wild in Africa, and that she was born only a few weeks after they were sold to a planter in the South. It thrilled us to think that our Hannah was virtually a savage. Who knew but that she was a Zulu princess? And there she was, working in our kitchen like any ordinary New York ducky.

No—I take that back; no ordinary servant, black or white, worked as Hannah did. She was not only exquisitely neat in her person, but she was neatness itself about her work. She never touched food

without first washing her hands, and the way she washed dishes made that homely and despised function a fine art. She scraped the dishes carefully first, then she let the hot water from the faucet run over them, to "wrench off the wust," she said; then she put them in a pan of boiling soap-suds, and washed them with a cloth, then into another pan of boiling water, then she set them on a wire basket to "dreen"; after which she wiped them on the most immaculate of towels. The silver and glass were washed separately, and dried on their own towels. Others will tell you that they do this, but they don't. Such cleanliness would have made us love Hannah even if she had not been a rare good cook. We should have been willing to forego delicacies just to have her wash dishes.

Though she may have been born a savage, she was also born a cook. No one ever cooked her specialties with her skill. She gave us a reputation for good eating

that we had never enjoyed before. Our Sunday breakfasts were the talk of our friends. They were called for twelve, noon, but my friend, the prima donna, who always arrived an hour or two late (she is distinguished in two continents for her unpunctuality), never found anything spoiled through waiting. We marvelled how Hannah did it, but she would not reveal the secret. I fancy, however, that she knew the prima donna's ways, and had the breakfast ready for the hour she came rather than for the hour she said she would come.

Hannah was so small and so amusing that we made a pet of her, and might have spoiled her had she not been so simple-minded and genuine. She never presumed in the least, and to the end kept up her little courtesy and her respectful manners. Our friends made as much of her as we did, and felt quite free to accept her invitations to dinner even when they were not accompanied by a word from us. It was

no unusual thing for me to come home in the evening and find an unexpected dinner-party on. Hannah neglected no detail of table service, from silver to flowers; everything was as it should be. If she, for reasons of her own, suspected that Rufus, the only one of my brothers living at home now, was a bit more interested in one of the young ladies present than in another, this one she would honour with a seat at his right hand and the biggest bunch of flowers. It was also her pleasure to make cakes of the most enticing sort and leave them at the doors of these young ladies with her respectful compliments. In one instance, it became quite embarrassing, and I induced Hannah to discontinue her gifts only by telling her that the young lady had in the house an alligator that had been sent from Florida. Hannah had a superstitious dread of reptiles, and imagined that this little creature was a full-sized "man-eater."

"I heerd it slidin' down the front stairs,"

she said. "No one don't ketch me goin' there agin. It might jump out at me when the do' was opened."

Curiously enough, considering her race, Hannah did not care for coloured people.

"I ain't got no use fer niggers, specially gingerbreads," she used to say; but let any one else speak of "niggers" in her presence, and she was furious. She preferred those of her race who were, as she described them, "black as the ace of space." Her devoted friends were mostly white people. From babies to brides, she adored them. Her regular Saturday afternoon diversion, in later years, was to gather together my little nieces and nephews and all their friends and take them out to Central Park, where she would hire a carriage and drive them around to see all the objects of interest.

There was no use in trying to make her take money from us for these occasions. It cut her to the heart if we suggested it, so we had to

make it up at Christmas, or at other times.

The "Zoo" was Hannah's special delight. One day she came back from an excursion to the park, her face radiant with delight.

"Miss Nell," she said, poking her head in at my door, "I seen the hick-a-pox."

"The what-a-pox?" said I.

"The hick-a-pox, you know, Miss Nell; that big beast that lives in the water, and dries hisself on a flatform."

Hannah never got names right, but there was no mistaking her meaning. At another time, after a raid on the Zoo, she said:

"Miss Nell, I seen the most frightfullest thing up there at the zoölogical gardens."

"What was it, Hannah—the hick-a-pox?"

"Oh, no, Miss Nell! much wuss than the hick-a-pox."

"Heavens! what was it?"

"The stricknen-van-borax."

"Never!" I exclaimed, by way of bluff.

"Yes, Miss Nell, all crawled up, just like it was digestin' itself after eatin' another snake!" Then, with a shudder, "Them stricknen-van-boraxes is the most rememse snakes in the world, ain't they?"

"Yes, Hannah, I believe they are."

"They're big enough to skeer me inter fits, an' I don't want to see nothin' no bigger."

Children's parties were a passion with Hannah, and every possible excuse was made to have them. Fortunately, I was not at home much during the day; but occasionally I surprised a most elaborate function at which the janitor's and washer-woman's children were allowed to participate to the extent of refreshments. Hannah had too decided an idea of the difference between mistress and maid to let the mingling go beyond the ice-cream and cake hour.

I don't know which Hannah enjoyed most—the society of babies, or that of

"growing children." I doubt whether she had any choice. All children loved her, and she was in some respects an ideal nurse. It was as a nurse that she had lived out in the South. The only trouble, her former employer wrote me, was that she assumed complete ownership of the child she took care of, and regarded the mother as an interloper. This would suit some mothers, but not all. She treated children as if they were companions, and talked with them as she would to persons of her own age.

I remember one day hearing Hannah's voice from the kitchen, talking in a confidential manner, and, knowing that she had no callers, I stepped to the door to see what it meant. There was no one in the room but Hannah and a six-months-old baby, borrowed from another apartment in the same house. Hannah was looking out the window, and the baby was perched up on the washtubs.

"Who are you talking to?" said I.

"I was just tellin' baby 'bout them newcomers 'cross the street. They're lovely people," she said, nodding approvingly. "They keep a full set er help."

"The baby doesn't understand you," said I.

"Don't you believe that, Miss Nell; babies understand a heap sight more ner people think."

As I left the kitchen, Hannah resumed her conversation, while the baby "goed" her comments.

Hannah's age was a mystery. When she came to us, she said she was twenty-five; but the lady in the South with whom she had lived said that she was thirty-six at that time, which I imagine was correct, for Hannah had no idea of figures. She was absolutely ignorant of their meaning. She was then over forty. She didn't look it, however, for it was at this time that a ticket-seller at the Grand Central Station said to her, when she went to buy a ticket for New Rochelle, "Half-price for you,

little girl." Hannah had too keen a sense of humour not to act upon his suggestion.

She was generous to a fault, and yet she didn't believe in throwing money away. She told me once that she would like to keep a little shop and sell things for what she paid for them.

"You would have to sell them for more than you paid for them," I told her.

"That ain't honest," she replied.

"You wouldn't make money otherwise," I insisted.

"I'd get my money back, though, and you don't want to do any more than that," she said, with conviction. There was no use in arguing with her. She had her own ideas on the subject of honesty, and would not change them.

CHAPTER XXI

HANNAH was a faithful soul, as I have good reason to remember. One night, I was aroused from my sleep by her hand on my shoulder.

"Miss Nell," she cried, "the house is on fire. Sound the relarm and save yo' mother." Then she pattered off down the hall, in her bare, black feet, to wake the others. Sure enough, the house was on fire. The apartment on the same floor with ours was entirely burned out, but ours was not scorched. We fled to the roof with my mother, and there met the rest of the tenants in varied array, among them Hannah, in her short, white night-gown, with her black feet peeping out below. It was an exciting night, and might have had a tragic ending but for Hannah's timely "relarm."

Speaking of Hannah's black feet, I don't remember that I ever experienced a stranger sensation than one evening when I saw her dressed for a party. She had on a low-necked and short-sleeved white muslin dress, and the effect of the black neck and black arms protruding from the white gown was, to say the least, peculiar. It was not often that Hannah went to a party, but when she did she invariably arrayed herself in white. She was a creature of contrasts in more ways than one.

Once she went to a wake. Our Irish washerwoman's husband had died, and his death was celebrated according to the custom of his people. Hannah was invited, and eagerly accepted the invitation.

"Were they all drunk?" I asked the next morning.

Hannah looked at me with a hurt expression on her black face.

"No, Miss Nell, it was a very respectable wake. There was no one drunk 'cept

them that came drunk." I thought that even those might have been enough to have made a somewhat gay party, but I said nothing.

"There was lovely flowers, too, and one piece, from his lodge, with 'I. H. S.' on it in mortels."

By the way of drawing her out, I said, "What does 'I. H. S.' mean?"

"You know well enough, Miss Nell; they always have it at funuls. It means 'I has ris.'"

The theatre was a favourite amusement of Hannah's, and she confided to me that the play she liked best of all was Mr. Jefferson in "Rip-and-van Wipple." One evening, she stopped at my bedroom door, her face wreathed in smiles.

"Miss Nell," she said, "I seen a fine play to-night."

"What was it, Hannah?"

"Funamabriscom," she said, and chuckled softly at the recollection. I was mystified for a moment; then I remembered

that "Fun on the Bristol" was the name of a farce running at one of the Broadway theatres.

"It ain't as nice as 'Rip-and-van Wipple,' though," and Mr. Jefferson's inimitable creation remained her favourite to the end.

Mme. Modjeska and her husband, the Count Bozenta, were among those who partook of Hannah's Sunday breakfasts; and, being fond of the theatre, she was anxious to see, in some of her famous parts, the actress who enjoyed her griddle-cakes so much. One morning, when she brought my *café-au-lait* to my bedside, she lingered at the door, and I knew that something was on her mind.

"What is it, Hannah?" I asked.

"Why, Miss Nell," she said, "I jest wanted to know if you wouldn't ask Mr. Presenta to give me tickets to see Madame Digesta in 'How Do You Like It?'"

I had never come so near spilling a cup of coffee in my life before, but I pulled

myself together in time to save Hannah's feelings and the bedclothes. I need hardly say that a verbatim report of this request to "Mr. Presenta" resulted in the tickets being sent to Hannah. She enjoyed the play very much, though she was rather shocked at Rosalind's costume in the forest of Arden, and thought that it would have been much more modest if she had worn longer skirts over her tights.

"Then Orlando wouldn't have thought her a boy," I suggested.

"O'Lander warn't no one's fool. He knowed she warn't no boy from the fust. He was only makin' 'bleve'"—an argument that a wiser head than Hannah's might have put forth.

Hannah was not all sweetness and light. She was subject to the blackest "dumps" I ever knew. When these "dumps" were on, she looked as stormy as a thundercloud, and her flashes of wrath were as sharp as lightning. During these occasions she always singled out one of the family to

smile upon, but the others she treated with sullen sarcasm. It was very trying, and we vowed every time that we would send her away; but when she came out from under the cloud she was so perfectly angelic and so amusing that we vowed we would never part with her.

At last the storms came so frequently, and her conduct was so exasperating, that we could not put up with it any longer; and when in a fit of temper she told me one day that she was going, I, much to her surprise, said that I thought it was the best thing that she could do. As I was really attached to the little creature, I got her a place as nurse, believing that a change would do her disposition good. She was the delight of her new mistress's heart for a while; then she got overbearing, and had to be sent away. And so she kept floating about, a year here and two years there, always keeping up her friendly relations with us, until finally she fell ill, at the age

of fifty, and was taken to the Presbyterian Hospital.

There they made a pet of her, as we had done. I went to see her frequently, and took her fruit and flowers, as she would have done by me in similar circumstances. One day, the head nurse of the ward sent for me, and I hastened to the hospital, to find poor Hannah very near her end. She was perfectly calm, though she realised the truth. I sat by her cot, holding her thin, black hand in mine. She spoke slowly and with difficulty.

"Miss Nell," and I bent over her, "you wouldn't think I'd saved a lot of money," and she smiled. "I've made a will, too, and left it all to Miss Catherine [the baby of the tubs, at this time a young lady of sixteen]. It's drawed up all right, and Mr. Rufus is my ex-ecutor."

"It will be a long time before she'll get *that* money," said I cheeringly. "You're good for many a year yet."

She only shook her head and pressed

my hand. It was Saturday, and I had to go out of town for over Sunday.

"I'll see you on Monday, Hannah," said I. "Good-bye till then."

"Do you see the white screams around them cots?" she whispered, pointing. I shuddered, for I knew what they meant. "They'll be one around my cot before Monday."

As I turned at the door to look back and wave my hand to her, I saw her eyes following me with an expression I shall not soon forget. On Monday, I called at the hospital, only to find that I was too late to see Hannah alive. The white screen was around her cot; a bunch of roses stood on the little table. At the head of the cot a card was pinned, bearing the legend:

HANNAH STREET

GEORGIA

Aged 35

CHAPTER XXII

LIVING in New York did not make us forget Birdlington. My mother and sisters spent their summers there, when possible, and I joined them for week-ends, as we say now. Things were very much the same. Aunt Maria still lived at Fair View, and the boys who lived next door had not yet gone out into the world. There was one of them, the youngest, who thought that he had a talent for writing, and he came to New York once to consult Dixey in the matter.

"I would like to write for your magazine," he said as one who had only to be touched to spout poetry or prose.

"What sort of writing?" said Dixey, by way of encouraging him, and also of drawing him out.

"It is a matter of indifference to me,"

said the young man pompously; "either original or copying."

Dixey fled to the back of the room to hide his emotions. "I would advise you to try copying," he said, when he could control his voice. "It will give you a wider range of subjects."

The young man thanked him for his practical suggestion, and said that he would copy out some things at once and send them to him.

Before leaving town, he called upon us, and my mother insisted upon his staying to luncheon. This he was pleased to do, as he had evidently come with that intention. He was a solemn young man, tall and thin, with short legs and a long body. He sat at the other end of the table from my mother, who, I noticed, regarded him rather curiously. Finally she said, "Sit down, Ernest; don't stand."

"I am sitting down," said Ernest, and, sure enough, he was, but he sat so high that he gave the impression of one standing.

The Redmonds were still living at Birdlington, but the schoolmaster had gone. Kate rejected his proposal of marriage with so much emphasis that he resigned his position and left the town, broken-hearted. I dare say that he married some one else soon after, as is the manner of broken-hearted men. Perhaps she would have been happier if she had married the schoolmaster. Her married life was not a success, through no fault of hers. A good-looking young man, with pleasant and attractive manners, came up from Philadelphia and won her heart; but his beauty was only skin-deep, and his attractive manners were all on the surface. She bore her troubles bravely, though they ended only with the death of her husband.

Nothing I enjoyed more than my visits to Birdlington. The quiet of Fair View, after the noise and hustle of New York, I found the most restful thing in the world. Aunt Maria still had her little

suppers, at which "frizzled beef," Sapsago cheese, and hot biscuit played the leading parts.

Poor, dear Aunt Maria! she would never have made a reporter, she was so unobserving. She could never tell five minutes after she had been talking with a man whether he had a beard or was smooth-shaven. One of her neighbours called once, and she hadn't the remotest idea who he was, though she knew him well. Since his last call, he had treated himself to a full set of false teeth, which, I must admit, gave his mouth a strange expression. I was sitting on the veranda with Aunt Maria when he called, and, though I recognised him instantly, I could see by her puzzled expression that she had not the remotest idea who he was. Something tickled his nose, and he sneezed. He sneezed with such force that his teeth went flying out over the grass. It was only then that Aunt Maria recognised him, and by the time he had picked them up and slipped

them into his coat-tail pocket, she was ready to take up the conversation intelligently, whereas before she was utterly at sea.

Aunt Maria was not only very kind-hearted, but she had a strong sense of duty. If any of the neighbours died, whether she knew the family or not, she went to the funeral, as an expression of neighbourly sympathy. Once, when I was spending a Sunday with her, she expressed a desire to have me call at a neighbour's house, where there had been a death, to leave a message of condolence from her, as she was not well enough to go herself. She did not know the people, or what the girl had died of, but they were fellow townsmen, and that was quite enough for her.

The house was on a back street, and, though I did not know it by sight, it was not hard to find. Half the town seemed to be standing in front of it. In the crowd, I saw the charwoman who used to

clean house for us in the old days—the one who objected to the statuary. “Don’t you go in there,” said she, grasping me by the arm. “They don’t let no one go inside, for she died of spotted-fever. You ken see the corpse if you look over the fence and peek inter the front winder.”

I was not anxious to see the corpse, but my eyes followed the direction of her finger, and there, sure enough, set up in the front window, was the coffin, with the dead girl in it. She had a wreath of flowers on her head, and a gilt chain, with a large gilt locket on it, around her neck. It was a ghastly sight, but the crowd enjoyed it, and sighed, “How natural.” There is a class of people who think they have not done their duty by their bereaved neighbours until they have gazed upon the face of the dead, and it was to gratify their friends that the parents of this dead girl hit upon the idea of putting her in the window. I took the charwoman’s advice, and did not go into the

house. As a matter of fact, I hastened back to Fair View and tried to forget what I had seen.

My visits to Birdlington were not so frequent as I should have liked. I was very busy with my work on the —— and with my letters, and I was always planning to have a paper of my own. I suppose that this craving for the ownership of a periodical was in the blood. However, I stayed with the —— for many years, and was the only woman on the staff for a long time. Indeed, there were not half a dozen women journalists in all New York, then. There was Kate Field, who was a free lance, and not attached to any one paper; and there was "Jennie June," who wrote fashion letters; and there was Miss Ellen Hutchinson, of the *Tribune*; and there was a woman on the *Sun*—this was about all.

Every one said that I worked too hard, and perhaps I did, but I did not know it. I was working along the line of my sym-

pathies, and it was so pleasant that I did not realise that it was work. I got used to late hours, and thrived under them. There was so much variety in my work that it almost seemed like play. I was considered a "star" interviewer, and met many interesting people in this branch of my work. I made it a rule to show the person interviewed the proof of what I had written, so that there could be no denials when it was too late. I was never asked to interview an unwilling victim, and I am very glad that I was not, for I doubt that I should have accepted the assignment.

One of my early duties was to write up a reception to Mme. Sarah Bernhardt, on the occasion of her first visit to America. It was supposed to be a reception given to the distinguished actress by the ladies of New York, but it was all arranged by her personal manager, the late Henry Jarrett, one of the cleverest men in the business. I did not care much about going

to receptions, and tried to beg off, but without success. My wardrobe of reception costumes was limited, but my sisters, who were anxious to have me go, said that they would rig me up. I refused point-blank the suggestion of a V-shaped corsage, but was prevailed upon to wear Marty's bonnet. I had never had one of my own since the night of the opera in Trenton. I did not want to wear the bonnet, but they all said that I should be very conspicuous if I didn't; so, not wanting to attract attention to myself, I consented.

I arrived rather late upon the scene. Mme. Bernhardt was already there, and was surrounded by a crowd of admirers, expressing their admiration in all kinds of French. You should have seen that crowd break away from Mme. Sarah the moment its eyes rested upon my bonnet. Most of the men and women who composed it knew me, but they had never seen me in that sort of a rig. I really felt sorry for Mme.

Sarah, for she stood alone except for Mr. Jarrett. "Where did you get it?" "Whose is it?" and other pertinent and impertinent questions were fired at me. Mme. Sarah regarded me curiously. Mr. Jarrett was getting nervous. He turned to the nearest lady for an explanation. It was given him, and he repeated it to his "star," who smiled graciously, and waited for the crowd to return, which it soon did.

When I got home, I gave Marty's bonnet back to her. "Well," said I, "if wearing my own hat would have made me any more conspicuous than wearing your bonnet, I'm glad I wore the bonnet."

I have not worn a bonnet since, and, as hats are worn nowadays by octogenarians, I shall continue to wear one to the end of my life.

.
In due course I bade good-bye to daily journalism, but I am still a journalist and still in harness, though the harness is light,

and easy to slip off should I want to drop it. I shall probably wear it to the end, which is the way when one's work is congenial.

THE END

By JEANNETTE L. GILDER

Author of "The Tomboy at Work"

The Autobiography of a Tomboy

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